

Contemporary Perceptions of Femininity and Masculinity and How These Influence Female Athletes' Actions and Behaviours

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Abstract

This thesis aims to discover the impact of contemporary perceptions of ‘femininity’ on the experiences, beliefs, and actions of female university athletes. In particular, the paper considers where these expectations are influential to how these female athletes act and behave. The actions and behaviours of the athletes considered include the mannerisms and forms of communication between themselves and different groups, actions carried out to present themselves in certain ways, and, how the athletes train and their goals.

Discussion will first focus on past literature relating to the prevalent discourses of traditional gender roles in sport, and the historical context of women in sport that shows how women have previously and are often still seen as the ‘other’ in sports (Hargreaves, 1994). In particular, the work of Butler will be drawn upon, to show how gender is discursively created and maintained, the performativity of gender and the heterosexual matrix (Butler, 1990, 1999, 2006). Furthermore, structures that influence people’s beliefs and perceptions will be explored, specifically looking at the notions of hegemony, hegemonic masculinity, and how political and civil society spread ideas to make them the norm (Bairner, 2007; Gramsci *et al*, 1998; Carrington and McDonald, 2009; Connell, 2002; Pringle, 2005). Toxic masculinity will also be explored, looking at how gender stereotypes have a negative impact on both men and women, thus causing groups to be stigmatised for behaving differently (Messner, 1992; Young and White, 2000). In addition to this, Foucault’s concepts looking at disciplinary technologies, strategies of surveillance and how ‘docile’ bodies are created will be explored (Foucault 1991; Mansfield *et al*, 2018).

These concepts are used to critically reflect upon the emergent themes for a number of semi-structured interviews held with female athletes. In particular, consideration is given to: 1) what the words ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ mean to them, 2) how they believe their peers perceive female athletes, 3) their experiences in sport as a female throughout their life and at university, and 4) how these experiences have influenced how they act now. These emergent themes thus allow scope to critically reflect upon the various narratives which emerge from female athletes in terms of everyday negotiation of their gender identities within daily life and within the specific context of sport, whilst creating opportunities to consider on how university sport cultures can be enhanced to ensure equality between females and males within this domain.

Introduction

“Let your women keep silence...for it is not permitted unto them to speak” (St Paul, 1 Corinthians 14:v34)

To say women and sport have had a tumultuous history would be an understatement. It is a history that is often seen as far more distant than in actuality. In 1921 the Football Association banned women from playing football on their grounds (Jenkel, 2020). This ban was not lifted until 1971. A 17 year old Virne Beatrice “Jackie” Mitchell struck out Lou Gehrig and Babe Ruth in 1931 (Smith and Nelson, 1998). The prospect of a 17-year-old girl showing up professional male athletes was too much and women were banned from playing professional baseball. This ban lasted all the way up to 1992. In 1967, Kathrine Switzer registered for the Boston Marathon, only using the initial of her first name (Pauline, 2013). She finished the race becoming the first woman to officially run the Boston Marathon but was later disqualified.

Fortunately, things have improved and women are now able to play and compete in most sports all over the world. However, women still have significantly lower participation rates, there is pay disparity amongst most sports; and women’s sport is largely underrepresented in the media (Connell, 2002; Pringle, 2005; Connell, 2012; Trolan, 2013; Smith & Wrynn, 2013; Fink, 2015; Mullins, 2015). It is necessary to understand what obstacles remain in place, whether this is institutional sexism or lingering attitudes with an aversion to women in sport (Messner, 1992; Young & White, 2000; Senner 2016). It must be understood why these barriers and feelings remain and importantly, how they impact female athletes. With universities and education systems being viewed as gendered institutions, it is therefore important to carry out research to investigate what barriers are in place for women at these sites (Connell, 2008).

The current research aims to discover what meaning the words ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ currently hold, and how this affects a selected university’s female athletes. The research delves into the experiences of the female athletes throughout their sporting careers, both growing up and at university. Arguments from recent literature on gender are compared to traditional gender stereotypes and expectations, exploring how they have changed and developed across time. It is then considered whether

these expectations are influential to how people, in this case twelve female athletes, act and behave. The actions and behaviours of the athletes considered include: mannerisms and communication between themselves and different groups; actions carried out to present themselves in certain ways; and, how the athletes train and their goals. These shall be explored through a narrative analysis to gain an understanding of each individual's unique experiences in sport and how they negotiate their gender identity.

Relevant literature used in this thesis scrutinises the discourse of traditional gender roles in sport (Andrews, 2000; Markula, 2001; Connell, 2008; , and the historical context of women in sport that shows how women have previously and are often still seen as the 'other' in sports (Messner, 1992; Hargreaves, 1994; Connell, 2002; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Judith Butler's concepts are used to explore how gender is discursively created, challenging its 'naturalness'. Her concepts of 'gender performance', 'gender performativity', and the 'heterosexual matrix' are used to look at how society uses signifiers such as appearance and behaviours to assign a gender to an individual and thus make them intelligible to society (Butler, 1990, 1997, 1999, 2006; Mansfield *et al*, 2018).

In addition to this, structures that influence people's beliefs and perceptions are explored, specifically looking at the notions of 'hegemony' and 'hegemonic masculinity' derived from the work of Antonio Gramsci, and how 'political' and 'civil' society spread ideas to make them the norm (Gramsci, Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1998; Connell, 2002; Bairner, 2007; Carrington and McDonald, 2009; Connell, 2012). These concepts are linked to Butler's, showing how current forms of power influence performances of gender and how they are perceived. The discursive formation of stereotypes identified in the work of Michel Foucault's is also explored, as are Foucault's arguments on the relationship between discourse and dominant forms of power, as well as strategies of surveillance (Foucault, 1972, 1978, 1985, 1991; Holub, 1992; McNay, 1992).

Previous research in this area has covered how female athletes are perceived to the audience, looking at whether more feminised versions of sports are more appealing (Angelini, 2008; Tredway, 2014; Thorpe, Toffoletti & Bruce, 2017). For example, it has been found that men were more attracted to feminine

sports; however females were more engaged in sports where females contradicted stereotypical gender ideals of being quiet and delicate, showing strength and aggression whilst playing sport (Angelini, 2008). Angelini (2008) also found that male sport was more appealing to both men and women. Therefore, the research aims to discover if upholding traditional gender roles is inhibiting to female athletes, and how much this inhibition occurs. Previous interviews with elite sportswomen suggest that they train in a certain way to maintain their 'femininity' and stay small instead of appearing too muscular and 'manly' (Kendall, 2015). The thesis also explores the relevance of gendered characteristics in contemporary society from the perspective of the participants, considering whether society has changed so that typically 'male virtues' and 'female virtues' are deemed to no longer apply to a specific gender.

There is currently very little research on perceptions of female athletes, femininity, masculinity and how this affects and influences the athletes themselves, highlighting the relevance of the current research. Previous literature and interviews with athletes suggest that not only are people's ideologies and prejudices affecting the way female athletes are perceived, it also impacts their individual experiences in sport and their wider lives.

Literature Review

Introduction

The literature review will firstly follow the development of feminist thought and literature, from it's inception, feminist movements and up to the present day. The concepts of Butler, Gramsci, Connell and Foucault will then be explored before looking at their applications in a sporting context.

Judith Butler's concepts have been used for the current research as they understand how gender is not natural or inherent (Butler, 1997). Butler's theories of gender performance and performativity are able to explain individual actions - the sociological act of being, dressing, what sports one does - all of which are conscious choices and therefore part of agency level actions. Foucault, Gramsci and Connell do not explain such individual actions to this extent. Foucault explains individual actions through surveillance and self-surveillance - people feeling like they need to or should act in certain ways. However, this is more through presentation and appearance, rather than idealised gendered behaviours which Butler explains.

Butler's concepts aptly explain what people do and the fact that gender performativity is a conscious act; individuals are aware that how they act has consequences and therefore chose to act in certain ways, negotiating femininity (Mansfield et al, 2018). Butler is useful to explain how an individual negotiates gender roles and expectations put on them by wider society, and she acknowledges that structures in society have influence on these behaviours; they are not just up to the individual entirely. However, Butler only recognises the impact of these structures; she does not go on to explain them or how they operate. Her theories of gender performance and gender performativity are based more on individual agency rather than structure, explaining how one performs their gender and how those performances are created and maintained. Foucault (1927, 1978, 1991) more effectively theorises around discourses, self-surveillance and disciplinary technologies, explaining how structures influence these individual actions and decisions. Foucault's theories are therefore useful to use alongside Butler's to understand the processes and structures that influence an individual's consciousness.

Gramsci's concepts are beneficial to the current research as they go into even further detail on the structures in society. As well as this, adaptation of his concepts, such as hegemonic masculinity, explains the power dynamic between males and females, explaining how males have and maintain dominance. Foucault explains how discourses and surveillance work to support power structures; however Gramsci and Connell's concepts better understand and explain in more detail what these structures are, and for the purpose of the current study, why power lies in the hands of males (Gramsci, Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1998; Connell, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity is more useful than Foucault's theories in understanding how power is enacted and why power is held by men in university sport and sports and society more generally. However, Gramsci's theories do little to understand individual actions and agency, and are therefore far more deterministic, making it useful to draw upon Foucault and Butler who understand conscious actions and therefore how to change these actions.

From a feminist standpoint, understanding individual agency and how to change one's actions is vital as it allows for a framework of progression towards equality between males and females (Mansfield et al, 2018). Foucault's theories are particularly useful for this as he explains how to challenge discourses, acknowledging how they are created and therefore how to form reverse discourses. His concept of 'practices of freedom' and 'technologies of the self' give women far more scope to change their position themselves (Foucault, 1988).

Gramsci's theories about challenging dominant norms and forms of power understand it on a larger scale. In a 'war of position' and 'war of movement', change cannot be facilitated until a large majority hold the same values (Gramsci, Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1998). This suggests women have few options to change their individual situations. In terms of feminism, these can be useful concepts as it is not about a small majority of women gaining power - gender equality is not reached until all women are equal. Although this would involve a revolutionary movement, these concepts provide a useful theoretical

framework in understanding how to change societies attitudes and values more broadly (Hargreaves, 1994).

Foucault's understanding of power that is omnipresent almost ignores the effectiveness and efficiency of systems in place that withhold power, refusing to give it up and suggests it is more fluid than in actuality. This puts more onus on the individual to be able to disrupt power relations than might be fair. However, with the way Gramsci explains how hegemony is upheld and perpetuated, creating an overhaul of the system can seem like an impossible task. Therefore Foucault's concepts giving individuals scope to challenge discourses and power relations, and creating individual successes opens the way for more people to achieve this. This essentially enables male dominance to be challenged on a smaller scale but more consistently, suggesting why his concepts are popular within feminism (Foucault, 1978; McNay, 1992). It should, however, be noted that Gramsci's concepts have limitations when applied to gender as his theories were created to describe the relations of social class, with hegemony relating to the ruling upper class.

Gender inequality and the development of feminist thought

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For centuries women have felt the burden of oppression, from medieval women facing difficulty expressing their religious knowledge to their extremely restricted way of life and gender roles. What is known as the 'earliest piece of English feminist polemic' comes from 1589 and the aptly-named Jane Anger (Walters, 2005). In her writing she challenged positions suggesting that Eve is superior to Adam, reminding those that it is women who look after men and 'without our care they lie in their beds as dogs in litter and go like lousy mackerel swimming in the heat of summer' (Anger, 1589).

Since then feminism has continued to pick up momentum, and in the early 20th century women theoretically achieved equality in the United Kingdom, both civilly and legally - women over the age of 30 were able to vote; the 1919 Sex Disqualification Act meant women could work in various professions; and, the civil service and the 1923 Matrimonial Causes Act provided equality in divorce

for men and women (Walters, 2005). At this time, the popular press portrayed feminists as frustrated spinsters and claimed that women had become so masculinised after the war that they are now 'it' rather than 'she' (Walters, 2005). Despite women having a much more adequate education, Virginia Woolf (2019) suggests in her book *A Room of One's Own* that women are still treated as inferior to men at universities, using the reference of 'Arthur's education fund' to point out how boys are still favoured. Woolf (2019) remarks that the only 'great' profession available to women until 1919 was marriage.

Second wave feminism emerged after the Second World War and in 1947 the United Nations commissioned a Status of Women report and consequently issued a Declaration of Human Rights two years later (Walters, 2005). The Declaration acknowledges the equal rights of women and men in terms of marriage, both during and at its termination; it also involves entitlement for women to assistance in their role as mothers (Walters, 2005). The United Nations held three international conferences between 1975 and 1985 acknowledging that feminism represents a political expression of concerns of women from a variety of backgrounds, classes, nationalities and ethnicities, and that the responses to these concerns must also be from a variety of different women (Walters, 2005).

Simone de Beauvoir, a French writer, attended these conferences and her book *'The Second Sex'* (1949) enabled many women to realise their frustrations. Beauvoir (1949) claims that throughout history women have been declined the right to create, invent, and to find meaning for life through variety, rather than just exist. Beauvoir (1949) argued that women were never the subject and always seen as 'other', by men and for men. Male-made values have subdued women so that they have come to represent mystery and nature, almost the non-human, so much so that what a woman represents is of more importance than what she is herself and what she experiences (Beauvoir, 1949). Beauvoir (1949) suggests an alternative solution to love is to instead be an 'independent woman' who embraces typically masculine attributes, working, creating and taking action on the same terms as men. Specifically, the idealisation of feminine traits was adamantly rejected by Beauvoir (1949) as she believed it would accept a myth created by men to restrict women and oppress them.

Just over a decade later in 1963, Betty Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique* destroyed the myth of the 'happy housewife' in the wealthy white suburbs of the United States. Friedan's (1963) book exposed how female oppression affects even wealthy women who live within the tight constraints of gender roles and often fall into a depressed acceptance. Friedan (1963) believed that not a husband, children, homely possessions, or being like other women had the ability to give a woman a sense of self. Friedan's background was in radical politics and this acute awareness for social injustices was apparent in her early writings; however she was often criticised for being too middle class with her writing and ideas, particularly suggesting women should plan their futures so they can leave family duties (Walters, 2005).

bell hooks, a black feminist, pointed out that to have to work and be able to work are very different circumstances (Walters, 2005). bell hooks (2000) in her book *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* criticised feminist politics for not allowing the women who are the biggest victims of sexism, and have no power to change their circumstance in life, to speak out. Given this, for some feminists such as Angela Davis and bell hooks, feminism was indeed seen as racist by continuously ignoring the deeply woven issues of race and class (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

In *Sexual Politics*, Kate Millet (1970) sought to pick apart the patriarchy as a political institution; she referred to politics as all 'powered structured relationships'. Millet (1970) stated that the relationship of power between men and women has largely been left unexamined but consists of dominance and subordination, with women being patronised and idolised simultaneously. Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* was also published in 1970, and questioned the 'natural' dependence and feeling of inferiority women have passively accepted for too long. The book covers topics such as how not being able to stray from typical gender roles such as cooking and housekeeping can induce anxiety and how women are fantasised by men, demeaning their sense of self (Greer, 2014).

In response to the women's liberation movement in Britain Juliet Mitchell (1971) wrote *Woman's Estate*, arguing that the most fundamentally oppressed people in society are women but they also have the potential to be the most revolutionary. Mitchell (1971) identified four key areas that need to be

reformed for women: production, reproduction, sexuality, and the socialisation of young people. Mitchell later commented on the meetings feminists had been holding across England from 1969 that allowed women to talk about their frustrations, saying they were particularly useful in helping women realise what they had previously thought as individual problems as a social predicament (Connell, 2002). In agreement with Mitchell's (1971) call for transforming the way children are socialised, Susan Brownmiller (1984) deconstructs the methods girls learn 'from the cradle' to compete against each other and charm men in her book *Femininity*. Brownmiller (1984) states that femininity is romanticised nonsense which is only upheld by being carefully contrived and is just the product of tradition, nostalgia and limitations imposed on women.

Judith Butler- The fragile nature of gender and it's performance

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Judith Butler has had a huge impact on the sociology of sport, despite only writing one article specifically relating to sport (Butler, 1998). Butler is a feminist philosopher and a leading cultural theorist of gender, who sought to counter beliefs that were brought about by assumptions of gender and its restrictions, as well as the limited meaning of gender linked to ideas of femininity and masculinity (Butler, 1999). Butler believed that a feminist theory that puts restrictions on the meaning of gender makes way for exclusionary gender norms within feminism, which consequently leads to homophobia (Butler, 1999). Butler saw the danger for feminism in idealising certain ways in which gender was to be expressed.

Through her work in *Gender Trouble* (1990, 1999, 2006), Butler aimed to undermine any attempts to create a discourse which delegitimises minority sexual practices and genders. Butler (1999) thought that as the subject of feminism is women, feminist critiques should understand how the category of 'woman' is formed and restrained by the structures of power it seeks liberation from. 'Second-wave' feminism was often criticised for focusing on white middle-class women, so Butler created resources that allowed for women to be understood more widely (Walters, 2005). As the influence of 'modernity' and second-wave feminism were coming to an end, Butler's work provided the foundations from which the next generation of feminist theory could be built (Mansfield *et al*, 2018). As gender intersects with

sexuality, class, race, region and ethnicity, the assumption that the term 'woman' indicates a common identity causes a political problem (Butler, 1999). Therefore Butler's work provides theories of how gender is discursively created and maintained, such as the 'performativity of gender' and the 'heterosexual matrix' (Butler, 1990, 1999, 2006).

Butler (1997) believed that there was little materialistic or substantial evidence to prove that gender or identities are inherent or natural, instead arguing they do not exist until the act of speaking calls them forth. Gender is produced and reproduced continuously in society by the way it is spoken about (Mansfield *et al*, 2018). Mansfield *et al* (2018) uses the example of the word 'lesbian' to show how it was not until it was discursively created to have negative connotations that female athletes began to be policed for their assumed sexual indiscreetness. Once the term 'lesbian' was in common discourse, it generated stereotypical images and women's sports became a 'hunting ground' (Cahn, 2015).

However, gender being discursively created through language does not mean that it is just a word; the word is supported by the developmental process in how it is practiced, wherein the use of the word is just a small part (Larsson, 2015). Butler (1990) states that there is an inferred collective agreement to act, perform, produce and maintain the distinct and opposite genders. The fact that these genders are 'cultural fictions' is hidden by the plausibility of the performances and productions, as well as the punishments that go with not adhering to believe in them or 'doing' them correctly (Butler, 1990). Once the words have been formed, what they mean is further developed by the various social meanings they acquire. Not only are identities formed through discourse, they are also a performance. The repeated performance brings them into being (Mansfield *et al*, 2018).

Gender performativity is thus understood as the everyday ways in which bodily gestures, styles and movements create the illusion of an adhering gendered self (Butler, 1990). Jayne Caudwell (2006), a feminist sport theorist, developed upon this further by stating that gender performativity also encompasses how the body expresses gender through shape, size, bulk and gesture. This is what Butler (1990) refers to as 'corporeal style'. This is the idea that someone cannot simply act feminine - they must also look feminine (Evans, 2006).

Butler (1993) notes that bodies often do not totally comply with the norms that are imposed on them, which further destabilises current ideas about gender, sex and sexuality. Gender has no origin, so gender performativity forms the concept of gender (Mansfield *et al*, 2018). As Butler (1990) puts it; there is no essence that gender externalises or expresses and, as gender is not fact, the multiple performances of gender create the idea of what gender is. The ability of gender to hide its origin; a collective agreement to perform and maintain gender, along with the punishments that accompany those who do not participate in gender 'correctly', drives our belief in its naturalness and necessity (Butler, 1990). Ravel and Rail (2007) point out that Butler's theories call into question the 'naturalness' of gender, sex, and sexuality that most people assume so that they become very unstable.

McRobbie (2005) states that there is a common misconception of gender performance that it is all voluntary, and the enactment you do is a choice, which would also mean that transforming gender relations could simply be done by self-alterations. Butler wishes to separate herself from those who promote the presence of individual agency paired with the ability to create change in the system of gender (McRobbie, 2005). This is because it would not take into consideration the ways in which relations of power define the prospect of opposition or change (McRobbie, 2005). Mansfield *et al* (2018) notes that although it would be good if gender equality could be achieved simply by people altering their 'performances', this does not give enough value and emphasis on the multitude of power structures that work to maintain the gender binary which Butler wishes to express.

Taking this into consideration, gender performance can be seen as a form of coercion - the body is forcibly shaped in accordance with the narrow constraints of the different genders (McRobbie, 2005). This coercion emerges from the variety of structures of power in society, which links in with Gramscian ideas of 'hegemony', 'political society' and 'civil society' (as will be discussed in more detail subsequently) which conceptualise how people are coerced into agreeing with or consent to societal norms (Gramsci, Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1998). Butler (1993) suggests that gender performance is conducted repetitively and continuously so that it becomes an unconscious performance, with

individuals taking part in established gender practices unknowingly so that consequently traditional gender roles are reproduced.

Gender 'performativity', on the other hand, is a more conscious act with the intention of having a certain effect so it becomes more political in essence (Mansfield *et al*, 2018). Gender is performed with the decision to re-enact traditional identities or non-traditional progressive acts; it is not just the loyal imitation of gender performance (Mansfield *et al*, 2018). This provides a theoretical understanding as to why there has always been so much social discomfort with women's athleticism. Women have asserted their right to sporting gender performativity, displaying the attributes that have long been seen as masculine, such as physical dominance, strength, skill and speed (Cahn, 2015). Butler suggests that the pursuit of women's sports undermines and challenges normative assumptions of the 'natural' female body due to what is often a public display and contestation of gender ideals (Linder, 2011).

Linder (2011) also notes that how women's athletic gender performativity is perceived can evolve and change. Linder (2011) gives the example of tennis player Martina Navratilova, who used to be seen as far too masculine, but was gradually integrated into ideas of what is an acceptable, understandable, and, in some cases, desirable physiology. This therefore shows the potential that female athletes have to call into question and destabilise the binary and normative interpretation of gender (Butler, 1998; Linder, 2011). Roth and Basow (2004) develop upon this, contending that by 'doing' masculinity and femininity we perform gender; therefore, not only the way we act but also the activities we continually do construct gender. To expand on this, liberal feminists sometimes see strength differences in women and men as natural, whereas radical feminists view it more as an ideology that is used to reproduce male dominance (Roth & Basow, 2004). If bodies 'do' femininity and masculinity, with femininity cultivating weakness and masculinity creating strength, then strength differences are just a social construction (Roth & Basow, 2004). Therefore, gender identity is not limited so much by one's biology or 'natural' body, but by the social understandings of our bodies - our 'cultural' body (Gill, 2007).

Butler goes on to expand upon her theory of gender performance stating that it is conducted in a way that maintains the 'cultural intelligibility' of gender: how people are understood by others and what

makes sense in society (Butler, 2006). Butler's (2006) 'grid of cultural intelligibility' or 'the heterosexual matrix' states that 'feminine' females are assumed to be heterosexual, as well as 'masculine' males, and therefore 'masculine' females and 'feminine' males are presumed homosexual as they are less intelligible to society. Signifiers of gender, sex and sexuality work collectively to form an image that others can use to make sense of people, making them intelligible (Mansfield *et al*, 2018). Lock (2006) states that because of this, often in society to be viewed as a real female, you must act and look feminine and identify as heterosexual.

Larsson, Redelius and Fagrell (2011) advance the concept of the heterosexual matrix by claiming that it also governs our behaviour as it is so ingrained in us. Carrying out a study on students, they found that people attempt to constrain the image of themselves that they present to others, as the students were conditioned into talking and engaging in certain ways so that they would feel and be viewed as heterosexual/normal (Larsson, Redelius & Fagrell, 2011).

Gramsci and Connell on Hegemony, the subordination of femininity

As Butler's concepts note, the performance of gender is heavily influenced by power structures in society. Antonio Gramsci explains these structures and how they can be countered using the concepts of 'hegemony', 'war of position' and 'public intellectuals'. Hegemony is what Gramsci uses to describe the system of alliance and power relations of society's ruling groups and the ways in which this position of power is sustained (Guilianotti, 2016). For the current research, the development and adaptation of this theory to the way males exercise authority over women is useful to consider; this is called hegemonic masculinity (Gramsci, Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1998; Connell, 2005; Bairner, 2007).

The concept of hegemony is used to describe the cultural dynamic by which a leading position in society is asserted and maintained by a group (Connell, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity refers to the pattern of gender relations that enables men to gain dominance over women, and the continuation of dominance (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Hegemonic Masculinity is not necessarily a specific set of characteristics, it is the form of masculinity that inhabits the hegemonic position (Connell, 2005).

Therefore hegemonic masculinity is differentiated from other forms of masculinity, specifically subordinated forms (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The currently dominant form of masculinity, hegemonic masculinity, is constructed as not working class, gay or black, and importantly, not feminine (Kimmel, Hearn & Connell, 2005). However, those who hold institutional power or wealth might be in their personal lives, far from the hegemonic pattern, and those who most visibly display hegemonic masculinity may just be exemplars, such as sports stars, and not the most powerful (Connell, 2005; Connell, 2011).

Acknowledging the diversity in masculinity was not adequate, therefore hegemonic masculinity sought to recognise the relations between various masculinities- dominance, alliance and subordination (Connell, 2005). Connell (2009) states that gender is not a fixed system but instead always open to change due to its complex structure that is full of tension and historically changing. Within masculinity gender politics is present and it is through practices of exclusion, exploitation and intimidation that these relations are constructed (Connell, 2005). Connell (2008) reiterates that the various patterns of masculinity are not equally available or respected. Most present in American and European society is the dominance of heterosexual men, with oppression positioning homosexual men at the bottom of the gender hierarchy among masculinities (Connell, 2005). This is a result of 'gayness', from the perspective of hegemonic masculinity, being easily associated with femininity and therefore explains the ferocity of homophobic attacks (Connell, 2005). Association to femininity is the cause of most exclusion within masculinities. Heterosexual boys and men are also excluded through a process that is marked by abusive language that clearly relates to femininity, labelling them 'sissys' and 'pushovers' (Connell, 2005).

Similarly to normative definitions of masculinity, hegemonic masculinity faces the same problem that not a great deal of men actually meet hegemonic standards of masculinity, in a statistical sense there is only a minority of men that actually enact it (Connell, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). However, hegemonic masculinity can also be seen as normative in the sense that it embodies what is the present most esteemed way of being a man, and all other men must position themselves around it

(Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity “ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005. pg. 832). Men in general gain from the subordination of women, therefore another key relation among masculinity is that of complicity with hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005). Connell (2005) suggests that masculinities that are constructed so that they are able to receive the benefits of the patriarchy, without running the risks of being viewed as on the front lines of the patriarchy, are complicit. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argue that hegemony is most powerful in relation to masculinities that are complicit to the hegemonic pattern and compliant heterosexual women.

As demonstrated above, hegemonic masculinity is constructed in relation to subordinated masculinities, but also to what Connell (1987) describes as ‘emphasised femininity’. Emphasised femininity is grounded in heterosexuality and associated with white, middle class, traditionally feminine women (Mattsson, 2015; Domeneghetti, 2019). Cockburn and Clarke (2002) suggest that to show emphasised femininity is to appear conventionally pretty and fashionable, and pay a significant amount of attention to one’s appearance. Connell (1987) suggests that emphasised femininity is constructed as a subordinated counterpart to hegemonic masculinity and is often performed specifically to men (Paechter, 2018). Although it is based on subordination, emphasised femininity represents a femininity that is very strong and, therefore, Connell (1987) states that it can cultivate legitimacy and acceptance for women.

Women who represent a femininity close to emphasised femininity do so based on heterosexuality, which in turn creates specific ideas about how women should present themselves and the idea of desirable femininity (Mattsson, 2015). Connell (1987) argues that emphasised femininity is not a position that has the potential to challenge gender structures as, although it may provide some women with legitimacy, it is still based on their subordination and a response to men’s preferences. Women may be able to gain a small amount of power through occupying this position but it will never be enough to oppose male dominance (Mattsson, 2015). For example, those who fit the pattern of emphasised

femininity could be less marginalised than other femininities such as lesbianism, but are still subordinated by men as they are obliging to the desires of masculinity (Connell, 1987; Domeneghetti, 2019). Therefore, the term 'emphasised' was specifically used instead of 'hegemonic' as this form of femininity is grounded in current gender relations, existing in a patriarchal society where all femininities must be constructed in the context of female subordination (Connell, 1987; Domeneghetti, 2019).

As illustrated above, the work of Connell is heavily influenced by Gramsci's concept of hegemony and the relations of dominance and subordination between groups. Gramsci goes on to theorise in more detail the dynamics of these relations and thus how power is gained and maintained. Gramsci states that, instead of through coercion, hegemony is obtained through consent by the ruled groups positively receiving the values and attitudes disseminated by the ruling class (Gramsci, Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1998). Traditional social relations are often supported in these attitudes and values, therefore making the ruling class ideologies become common sense. Though hegemony can be supported through force and violence, it's meaning more closely aligns with ascendancy through persuasion, culture and institutions (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Gramsci outlines the different structures in society within which these ideologies and values are disseminated, naming them 'civil society' (Gramsci, Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1998). Examples of civil society include religion, education, and the media - and, in the current day, social media and sport (Carrington and McDonald, 2009).

As well as civil society, Gramsci, Hoare and Nowell-Smith (1998) states that 'political society' is the system of structures that work to maintain the ruling group's position through coercion. Gramsci states that examples of political society are the military, police and judiciary system - organisations that represent constitutional authority - whose role is far less discrete than civil society (Sugden and Bairner, 1992). However, due to civil society being so successful in attaining the consent of populations, the 'coercion' of political society is used on a much smaller scale. Gramsci, Hoare and Nowell-Smith (1998) suggests that the public is unaware of the systems in place that distribute ideologies due to their willingness to adhere to them, even though these ideologies often discriminate against and marginalise certain groups.

In addition to this, another Gramscian concept that is key is the delineation between a 'war of position' and 'war of movement'. As Hall (1996) states, if the masses were to oppose hegemonic ideologies, Gramsci proposes these concepts as a method of resistance. A 'war of movement' is the strategy of taking up a frontal attack on the state (Bates, 1975). However, Gramsci, Hoare and Nowell-Smith (1998) argue that this tactic would only be effective if the power in the society was held by structures in political society. In a society where structures of civil society are more developed and dominant, such as capitalist countries, Gramsci states that the more successful strategy would be a 'war of position' (Cox, 1983). This refers to areas where the state, i.e. 'political society', has less presence and 'civil society', such as the media, is far more influential. A war of position operates by gradually building momentum and stability by inciting a feeling of resentment and injustice in the masses, thus attempting to form new social norms (Mayo, 2005).

To cultivate a war of position, the public would initially need to be educated and probed to question hegemonic norms, ensuring they believed and felt strongly about the cause before developing a war of movement (Gramsci, Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1998; Mayo, 2005). Gramsci, Hoare and Nowell-Smith (1998) argue that for this to happen individuals would need to work both from within and outside the state apparatus.

Levy and Egan (2003) suggest that from a feminist standpoint, a war of position would be beneficial as it is strategic in the long run, and allows patriarchal ideologies and gender stereotypes to be rewritten by women. Socialist feminist ideas regarding educational reform coincide with Gramsci's concept of a war of position as they believe that the foundations of modern society - economic, political and social - must be abolished to relinquish the struggle against entangled multiple oppressions (Eisenstein, 1979; Lykke, 2020). Hargreaves (1994) states that socialist feminists seek to understand how capitalist relations and gender relations depend on each other with the outcome of eliminating sexual and class oppression. Socialist feminism attempts to highlight the inseparability of class and gender oppression (Black, 2019). Socialist feminists aim to liberate those that are exploited and oppressed under the patriarchy and capitalism and redistribute power and wealth away from the few (Gaebel, 2018).

Gramsci's ideas would propose a complete reconceptualising of gender stereotypes and roles. However, socialist feminists would suggest that the current ideology of the nuclear family with rigid gender roles of the man being the breadwinner and the woman being the homemaker, roles which have been allocated via oppression, should also be revalued (Takeuchi, 2017). This in turn gives them equal worth, thus making it more acceptable for both genders to take either role, removing gender constraints (Diamond and Orenstein, 1999).

Furthermore, the concepts of war of position and war of movement are both in line with radical feminist views that challenge patriarchy by assessing sex roles and questioning male superiority in terms of economics and power (Eisenstein, 1977). Radical feminists use the term patriarchy as a description for the power relation of male dominance over women and to discover the cause of women's oppression (Sultana, 2010). Radical feminists believe that the patriarchy is to blame for women's subordination and therefore wish to overthrow it (Syiva Fauzia & Cahyaning Rahayu, 2019). Hargreaves (1994) and Willis (1984) state that radical feminists view patriarchy as a uniform, unjust systematic form of ruling that excludes women as equals and could only be challenged with a revolutionary movement (Mojab & Carpenter, 2019). This would allow radical feminists to achieve their goal of transforming the entire system of the patriarchy (Black, 2019).

Gramsci, Hoare and Nowell-Smith (1998) state that public intellectuals are vital agents for a war of position to take place. Public intellectuals are individuals who disseminate information to the general public, for example through writings on various different social matters (Posner, 2003). Public intellectuals are dubious of the state and also a political utopia (Bairner, 2009). Public intellectual's writings are significant in influencing what ideologies become the norm and what values the public consent to (Merrington, 1977). Gramsci claims that everyone is an intellectual; however some intellectuals are believed to hold more authority and value than others, so not all go on to take on the role of a public intellectual (Crehan, 2002).

Gramsci, Hoare and Nowell-Smith (1998) identify two types of intellectuals, a 'traditional intellectual' and an 'organic intellectual'. The traditional intellectual can either work on behalf of the state or

opposing it, but mostly they support it as they come from structures within capitalist society (Mayo, 2005). Organic intellectuals transpire outside these structures and occur naturally so they are tied to certain social groups specific to the period of time that group was present in (Gramsci, Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1998). Entwistle (1979) notes that it is significant for organic intellectuals to be authentic, to have originated from a movement - for example, feminist movements - and not just be an intellectual from another social group who is sympathetic to that movement. Shirlow and McEvoy (2008) add that organic intellectuals must have a relationship to the groups they represent or are working on behalf of, as it is important they have credibility from them. This demonstrates how anti-intellectualism thrives and highlights the value in coming from outside capitalist structures, rather than being involved too closely with them, potentially allowing one's ideologies to be altered (Salamini, 1981; Lenskyj, 2008). As Hardin (2011) points out, even those with an activism of strong intent can end up unknowingly conforming to dominant ideologies due to the ruling structures being so overpowering.

Foucault and Gender - Power and Discourse

The concepts of Michael Foucault are also of pertinence for the current study, specifically those around power relations and discourse. Foucault (1978) redefined the workings of power, viewing them as relational. Foucault (1978) claims that power is not held by one person at one time but that there is a multiplicity of force relations, constantly changing and shifting. Foucault rejected the idea that power could be possessed, and instead argued that it operated through people's various actions (Holub, 1992). Foucault (1978) believed that divisions in society and inequalities - political, social and economical - are the instant result of power relations that unequal amounts of force are invested with. Holub (1992) adds that this is often a result of individuals not having the equal ability to exercise power or access to it. Foucault was insistent that this theory of power existed in every relationship, but is positive and productive, not just limiting and repressive (McNay, 1992).

The term panopticism refers to the form of control that reduces the multiple forces of power into a single acceptable form of regularity (Mansfield *et al*, 2018). This form of control works through surveillance; the 'invisible gaze' watches from various locations to ensure that people are behaving in a normal and

acceptable manner, through self-surveillance (Mansfield *et al*, 2018). For example, feminist researchers have explored how fitness magazines provide an invisible gaze to ensure those reading the magazines self-survey their bodies, finding their imperfections to make them strive towards the 'perfect' bodies advertised as 'normal' in these magazines (Jette, 2006; Markula, 1995). Foucault (1991) argues that these strategies of surveillance and self-surveillance are disciplinary technologies that are specifically designed to create 'docile bodies'. To ensure that citizens remain docile and controlled, these disciplinary technologies are always developing and improving to make citizens productive and as useful as possible (Foucault, 1991).

Anatomo-politics refers to the 'anatomization', becoming one of a collectivity - in this case, for the purpose of productivity and governance (Foucault, 2008). Foucault (1978) added that anatomo-politics is reinforced by surveillance and disciplinary technologies so that the individual human body is targeted, in particular in capitalist societies. The body can be seen as the core of the fight for domination and it is through the various forces that act on it that it is constantly shaped and remoulded (McNay, 1992). As Foucault (1985) states that the body can be seen as a surface for which events are inscribed. For feminists the body is significant when examining women's oppression as the biological differences between female and male bodies are used to legitimise gender inequality and suggest that women are naturally inferior to men (McNay, 1992). Women's bodies are compared to men's bodies using male standards and are therefore regarded as inferior, and often women's bodies are defined solely based on their physical capabilities (Beauvoir, 1949; McNay, 1992).

Whereas anatomo-politics concerns individuals, biopolitics is aimed at massifying populations - it regards man as a species, rather than man as a body (Foucault, 2008). Foucault states that biopolitics is practised through various state apparatuses using regulatory actions (Mansfield *et al*, 2018). Foucault (1978) argues that it is important that the sovereignty of the state is not assumed to be given at the outset, as these forms of power are only terminal. The term 'governmentality' is often used to describe the willingness of the masses to comply; however as Foucault (2007) states, government intervention is remodelled rather than reduced depending on its needs. Modern modes of governmentality included

disciplinary technologies being dispersed, with the result of individuals taking more responsibility for managing themselves and this becoming the norm (Maguire, 2002).

Foucault (1978) argued that dominant forms of knowledge support power relations; in other words, dominance is reinforced by 'discursive formations' which assist it. Discourses are a group of various concepts and ideas that come to create statements and certain effects; the statements then assume certain meanings by connecting into 'theoretical formations' (Foucault, 1972). Foucault states that the formation of knowledge is always tied in with specific regimes of power in history and so each society creates its own certainties which function to regulate and normalise that society (McNay, 1992). Power and knowledge imply each other directly; there can be no power relation without a domain of knowledge (Foucault, 1997).

Foucault (1978) added that it is possible to change discourses through systematically analysing how they were formed; it just requires individuals to break out of their docility so that social change can occur. Foucault (1988) perceived the 'self' to be a continually altering form due to the pressures of discourse and power, but it was possible for one to form their own self through problematising dominant discursive formations as well as power relations. Foucault (1985) referred to this as 'self-reformation', describing it as the 'technologies of the self' whereby one becomes the subject, i.e. subjectivation, through various processes including the aforementioned problematisation. Foucault's inspection of the technologies of the self centred on how people understood the various moral codes surrounding them and made sense of them (Mansfield *et al*, 2018). Foucault (1988) believed that there are various methods of engaging in thought about one's own relationship to themselves through 'practices of freedom'. In this case freedom does not refer to absolute liberation from dominant discourse and power relations, but instead means having a critical attitude towards them (Foucault, 1988).

These concepts have largely appealed to feminists who have embraced the notion of challenging the forces of power and discourses behind the binary feminine / masculine bodies, instead of ideas of the body being based on ideologies and material distinctions (McNay, 1992). Feminists welcome the idea of engaging in practices of freedom to allow themselves to think outside discourses (Mansfield *et al*,

2018). 'Reverse discourse' is used by individuals who are seen as deviant to create their own identity and to demand more rights, often using the same categories and vocabulary through which they were marginalised (Foucault, 1978). It is understood by feminists that if the categories of femininity and masculinity are to be broken down, it is necessary to not only examine the construction of female sexuality but also male sexuality (McNay, 1992). As Connell (1987) states, masculinity is largely established on the physical perception of maleness and the disciplinary techniques used on male bodies which have resulted in aggression and rationality to be seen as dominant masculine characteristics.

Butler, Gramsci and Foucault - applications in sport

Butler and gender in sport

In her seminal work on sport, Butler (1998) argued that sport is a public contestation of what society takes for granted as idealised feminine morphologies. Using Butler's theory of the heterosexual matrix to underpin the study, Tredway (2014) analysed the events after professional tennis player Amelie Mauresmo came out as lesbian. Before coming out, Mauresmo was most often described as unseeded but the discourse shifted to descriptions of her body being 'masculine' and questioning her biological sex (Tredway, 2014). The press made comments such as 'she struts cockily around the court like a weightlifter', 'huge linebacker shoulders' and 'women normally only play tennis against men in mixed doubles but that all changed yesterday' (Miller, McKay & Martin, 2001; Forman and Plymire, 2005). Tredway (2014) remarks that Butler's concept of the heterosexual matrix does not work when one's sexuality and sex is known, resulting in the gender being assumed, as in Mauresmo's case. The theory is originally based around the sex and gender being the known categories leading to the sexuality being assumed.

Tredway (2014) suggests that her perceived masculinity was constructed by the media supported by comments from other professional female tennis players. It is pointed out that gender is not fixed but is instead a spectrum of femininity and masculinity as poles on either end which very few people, if any, reach (Tredway, 2014). Tredway (2014) claims that the fact that there has only been three female tennis

players that have publicly come out as lesbians during their careers suggests deep rooted homophobia in women's tennis. It is suggested that the heterosexual matrix needs to be adapted showing that when sexuality and sex are the known categories, gender is assumed (Tredway, 2014). In this case the matrix works so that if a female is homosexual they are assumed to be masculine, and if a male is homosexual they are assumed to be feminine (Tredway, 2014). Mauresmo rejected heterosexuality, therefore the public understood her to also be rejecting femininity (Tredway, 2014).

There have been other cases where female athletes have been accused of not being women. In most cases this is a result of their gender performativity. For example, Caster Semenya, a female runner, has been made to undergo medical tests to confirm that she is a woman. In this instance, the problem lies with the relational influence between 'gender' and 'sex', with 'woman' and 'female' being signifiers that have attained problematic significations, leading to the confusion over the separation of 'women' and 'men' rather than the biological 'female' and 'male' (Boykoff & Yasuoka, 2015; Butler, 1990). If Semenya had not performed masculinity then this may not have provoked those to examine her and medically verify her sex (Mansfield *et al*, 2018).

Gramsci, Connell and gender in sport

Hargreaves and McDonald (2000) believe that a Gramscian analysis of sport allows it to be viewed as both worthwhile and exploitative, although most hegemonic masculinity research has highlighted sports negative features. The vast majority of studies that apply the concept of hegemony to sport do so using hegemonic masculinity, therefore these shall be explored. Sport is a critical location for patriarchal values and structures, masculine hegemony, to be constructed and reconstructed; it is seen as a significant part of the exclusivist self-sustaining male culture (Rowe, 1998; Connell, 2012). In a sporting context, male and female body's limitations are put on display and their capacities debated (Messner, 2002). It is argued that men created modern sport as an institution that confirms the idea that male bodies are superior to females (Messner, 2002). Sport is a historically masculine context in which hegemonic masculinity has consigned women, and men who do not fit the hegemonic pattern,

subordinate (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Connell (2012) states that sport has become a key apparatus of gender hegemony in wealthy countries and a crucial feature of masculine imagery.

Within society and sport, hegemonic masculinity endorses an idealised version of masculinity that focuses on competitiveness, aggression and force, marginalising women and men that do not adhere to this form of masculinity (McKay, 1997; Connell, 2012). As a consequence of this, an idealised form of femininity of being delicate and fragile is also encouraged through hegemonic masculinity, and, as Messner (1992) suggests, the aggressive characteristics of sport have sought to counter feminisation. Messner (1992) states that the arguably sexist, aggressive, and violent culture that sport historically possessed, meant that the introduction of women was not widely accepted (Young & White, 2000; Senner, 2016).

Hegemonic masculinity works to maintain these ideologies of femininity and masculinity most effectively through civil society, particularly the media and sporting governing bodies where females are largely underrepresented and male interest dominates (Connell, 2002; Pringle, 2005; Trolan, 2013; Smith & Wrynn, 2013; Fink, 2015; Mullins, 2015). It is men who own teams, earn significantly higher salaries and in both women's and men's sports, men dominate coaching positions (Connell, 2012). The amount of coverage of women's sport in traditional media outlets is also significantly lower than that of their male counterparts (Cooky, Messner & Hextrum, 2013). In addition to this sport remains male dominated through pitting women's performance against a hegemonic masculine standard (Connell, 2012).

Work by Connell (2008) shows how gender and masculinity is constructed in physical education and sport in schools. Certain areas of school life are constructed as masculine in nature, such as physical education and manual arts, that derive from occupations usually dominated by men (Connell, 2008). These areas of the curricular have a large capacity to promote hegemonic forms of masculinity and therefore can be viewed as 'masculine vortices' (Connell, 2008; Mooney & Hickey, 2012). Connell (2008) states that due to the strongly ingrained histories and the current working patterns of schools and the education system, these organisations are gendered, therefore the effects they have on children are

not accidental. It has long been acknowledged that there is a connection between the construction of masculinity and sports in childhood, and schools provide the foundations for this process (Messner, 1990; Connell, 2008). Often at the expense of others, physical education and sport are prone to benefit those who most embody hegemonic masculinity (Pringle, 2008; Mooney & Hickey, 2012). Certain sports are seen as a test of manhood, those that involve violence and physical confrontation, they therefore become intertwined with the definition of hegemonic masculinity in schools (Connell, 2008).

Work by Messner (1990) showed how males have different experiences within sport. Depending on their social class, backgrounds and race, certain structures of opportunity were only available to some of the men, based on the constitution of 'respected masculine status' (Messner, 1990). This highlighted the relations between different forms of masculinity and how the hegemonic pattern asserts dominance, while other forms are subordinated (Connell, 2005). As Messner's (1992) research shows, key topics that allowed male athletes to bond together were homophobia and misogyny, forming a masculine identity that discouraged anything that was seen as feminine. Therefore females who play contact sports such as rugby, are viewed as instruments of resistance opposing hegemonic masculinity (Howe, 2003).

Foucault and gender in sport

Sports are often seen as the natural domain of males, but Foucauldian theorising provides a useful way of challenging this by problematising the discursive connection between masculinity and sport (Andrews, 2000). In line with the arguments of Foucault, physical activity can act as a technology of domination and sports feminists have explored how it can tie women into normalising practices (Duncan, 1994; Eskes, Duncan & Miller, 1998; Markula, 1995, 2000, 2001). Drawing upon Foucauldian concepts, Markula (2003) presents studies that show how physical activity regulates women into docile bodies who follow a discursive regime without question.

Similarly, Johns and Johns (2000) undertook research on gymnasts, looking at how the discursive practice of dieting was formed by the technology of the self, and used as a way to create personal transformation or technology of power in order to dominate. Johns and Johns (2000) argued that

athlete's nutrition governed them by causing them to be under constant surveillance from themselves, other athletes and their coaches. They found that the athletes were exposed to the normalising discourse of the ideal body that is demanded in elite or high level gymnastics (Markula, 2003). Johns and Johns (2000) found that dieting was used as a technology of domination as the athletes were labelled lazy and fat if they diverged from what was seen to be the ideal body shape. For other athletes, Johns and Johns (2000) suggest that dieting was used as a coping mechanism for discursive power relations and that they were able to work around the required body image so that dieting became more of a practice of transformation. They concluded that it was very hard to distinguish which technology more heavily directed the athletes behaviours (Johns & Johns, 2000).

Gwen Chapman (1997) carried out research into how women's lightweight rowers managed their weight, again drawing upon the work of Foucault to inform her analysis. In her research, Chapman (1997) described the technologies of the self by explaining that they result in a subjectification whereas objectification is the result of technologies of power. The research analysed the athletes and their behaviour to see if and how dieting functioned as a technology of power that caused the rowers to be under discursive control and objectified (Chapman, 1997). However, Chapman (1997) also found that at the same time it was used as a technology of the self that, to an extent, granted some subjectivity. Weight management practices were not solely an external oppressive power to the athletes as they enabled the rowers to have some practices of freedom within the context of their sport -, for example, having a say in the creation of their individual diet plan and refusing certain team weigh-ins (Chapman, 1997). For the rowers, weight management did not challenge relations of power but, similarly to Johns and Johns' study, was used as a means of coping with the demand of discursive control. Both studies were also on athletes where the ideal body shape for performance is in keeping with feminine ideologies of body image.

Jennifer Wesley (2001) carried out research that looked at how female bodybuilders can become a site for technologies of the self, suggesting that the sport allows the participants to negotiate gender identity. Female bodybuilders already defy many dominant discourses of gender identity due to their heavily-

built muscular bodies, but they also work around meanings of gender through their bodies (Wesley, 2001). Wesley (2001) concluded that bodybuilding has the potential to be a site for technologies of the self and technologies of femininity, as the women are active agents in the choices over their body but not separate from the social environment in which they occur. The fact that the women became uncomfortable with their bodies if they digressed too much from what is believed to be an ideal feminine body proves how difficult it is to challenge technologies of femininity (Wesley, 2001).

Traditional ideas of femininity as weak and timid were challenged by the women's strong athletic and skilful bodies which shows that sport practices were used by some of the athletes to challenge women's oppression (Wesley, 2001; Markula, 2003). This is in keeping with Foucault's understanding of power as relational, in that where power exists it will be challenged and resisted (Markula, 2003). This also exposes limitations to the use of a Foucauldian analysis as his concept of resistance does not facilitate many feminists main goal of completely transforming power relations so they are no longer uneven between the dominated and dominant (Markula, 2003).

Summary

Previous feminist literature provides insight into the ways women have been subordinated in wider society. From education, occupations and roles within the family, men have historically been prioritised. This provides a historical context for the experiences and themes that emerge from the data.

Butler's (1990, 1997, 1999, 2006) theories of gender performance, performativity and the heterosexual matrix will be applied to the current research to explore the conscious decisions of the participants to either conform to or reject femininity.

Foucault's (1972, 1978, 1991, 2008) theories of power and discourse will be used to examine what the data reveals are the current discursive formations surrounding female athletes and women's sport to further understand the participants actions and behaviours. It will be examined how these discourses work to support dominant power relations both within and outside the university.

Gramsci and Connell's concepts of hegemony and hegemonic masculinity will be applied to explore the specific power relations between women and men within the university and in society more generally (Gramsci, Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1998; Connell, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2012).

Methodology

Methodological approach:

Research methods are important as, with all sciences, good social science is based on good evidence, which cannot be attained without the appropriate methodology (McNeil & Chapman, 2005). A researcher's methodological position is constructed from a set of ontological and epistemological assumptions (Atkinson, 2017). A methodology is the framework used to view reality and understand the world; with it comes a set of assumptions about real life, how researchers can engage with reality, and thus learn from it (Atkinson, 2017). Atkinson (2017) states that methods are tools that allow researchers to examine topics, allowing information to be assembled that is free of bias and can be analysed with the appropriate technique. Such tools include surveys, ethnographies and interviews, which are used in the current research, which enable observations that can be analysed and used to either extend on or construct theory. Ontology refers to the philosophical study of what knowledge actually is, the nature and existence of phenomena, and, specifically, whether knowledge is something that is experienced or something that can be observed (Lindlof & Taylor, 2010). Epistemology is also a philosophical consideration, exploring how knowledge of phenomena is acquired, and deals with what should count as knowledge (Jones, 2015). In an epistemological sense, one endeavours to find laws, rules, and cause and effect relationships to learn about the objective world (Atkinson, 2017).

Jones (2015) states that there are three main approaches to the nature of knowledge which are positivism, post-positivism and interpretivism. Each approach has different ontological and epistemological assumptions, and therefore implications on how the research should be carried out, the nature of the collected data, and how it should be analysed and interpreted, all of which are dependent on the type of research questions being explored (Jones, 2015).

Both positivism and post-positivism transpire from the methodological perspective of the world that centres around material reality that can be measured and observed using the five senses (Atkinson, 2017). Positivism is the view that there exists a singular reality that is measurable and that issues of cause and effect can only be properly investigated empirically (Elliot *et al*, 2016). Positivists believe that scientific knowledge is the only true and valid form of knowledge; for example, human behaviour can be observed and measured, allowing for statistical analysis to obtain ‘facts’ and ‘laws’ (Atkinson, 2017). Obtaining these facts and laws has the objective that they can then be applied to various situations to predict or explain ensuing behaviour. A positivist approach however, discourages speculation and generalisation by focusing on technically verifying details, limiting the possibilities of empirical analysis (Elliot *et al*, 2016).

Positivists view sociology as the ‘science of society’ and therefore view society as far more important than the individual, viewing human behaviour as something that can be scientifically measured (McNeil & Chapman, 2005). Positivists take a more deterministic approach believing that people are merely puppets of society, and that there are social laws and forces that govern our everyday experiences (McNeil & Chapman, 2005). This more closely aligns with structuralist theories that view society as a cohesive self-supporting structure. Structuralist thinking tools are used in the current research through the work of Gramsci and Connell. However, it was not deemed appropriate for the research to take a positivist position as post-structuralist theories, through Butler’s and Foucault’s concepts, are also used, and, taking into consideration the feminist standpoint this research takes, it was important for an approach to be taken that views the individual as significant.

Post-positivism intends to challenge the dominance of positivism by taking a normative or critical approach, contrasting what is viewed as objectivist or rationalist bias of the domineering theories (Brown, McLean & McMillan, 2018). It focuses on displaying the probability of something via measurement and observation (Atkinson, 2017). Post-positivists challenge how we see knowledge as certain and believe that it is only through objective observations that researchers can grasp the laws and rules that govern certain phenomena (Atkinson, 2017). Unlike positivism which promotes independence

of the researcher and that which is being researched, post-positivism values human knowledge in understanding reality.

Interpretivism is based on subjectivity, with social phenomena measured using non-numerical data such as statements or words from the viewpoint of the participant (Jones, 2015). The researcher then interprets the data, endeavouring to reveal explanations and meanings to what has been found. The interpretative approach is not interested in seeking out a single 'truth' but rather acknowledging and understanding that there may be multiple truths (Jones, 2015). Interpretivists are able to gain information from the subjects' perspective to try and understand them, rather than just collecting measurements about them. Unlike positivism, interpretivism views individuals as conscious beings who are active and aware of social situations, and are therefore able to make their own choices on how to act (McNeil & Chapman, 2005). Interpretivists believe that if we are to understand and explain an occurrence in the social world, then we must take into account how those involved think and feel about it.

It is therefore appropriate that the current research takes an interpretivist approach to collecting the data through interviews. This allows for not just an understanding of what experiences the participants have had, but also an understanding of what they have meant to them and how they have impacted the participants. This is necessary due to the nature and the aim of the research question, exploring how masculinity and femininity impacts the participants' actions and behaviours, thus providing a better foundation to interpret what meanings and explanations there are for these behaviours (Jones, 2015).

Due to the research taking an interpretivist approach and the use of interviews for data collection methods, the resulting data was qualitative in nature. Qualitative research aims to gain insight into life experiences, the construction of meaning and oppressive practices (Atkinson, 2017). This is appropriate for the study as qualitative research intends to find qualities, such as thoughts and feelings, that are not quantifiable (Jones, 2015). Placing a frequency count on the information collected means that its value is derived by numbers; however, experiences should not be categorised as such, given that a rare

experience can be just as valuable and meaningful, if not more important, than common ones (Krane, Anderson & Stean, 1997). As McNeil and Chapman (2005) state, the focus of qualitative data is to present the quality of life described, and one of the aims of the current research is to discover what barriers are in place that prevent women having a more positive experience with sport and exercise.

Feminist methodology

In the 1980s, there was an important development in social research with the growth of feminist research, with feminist academics showing how a male view of the world has dominated in all academic disciplines (McNeil & Chapman, 2005). Feminists are of the view that reality is socially constructed by those who are privileged by the structures in a patriarchal society (Atkinson, 2017). This meant that women were largely ignored in the social sciences except with how they related to men; feminist research thus worked to restore the balance through research conducted through women's perspectives and reinterpreting data collated by men (McNeil & Chapman, 2005). Feminist researchers also aimed to highlight how these patriarchal structures influence the production of 'knowledge' and ideologies (Atkinson, 2017). The intention of feminist enquiry was to liberate women and create more equal and open methodological techniques that are better suited to carrying out research into women's views and issues (McNeil & Chapman, 2005).

In light of this, the current research used feminist methodologies by having all the data collected from women's perspectives. Only the university's female athletes are being interviewed about their lives and experiences so as to better understand how modern perceptions of femininity and masculinity have actually affected these women's lives directly and what impact they have had on them. As Walters (2005) states, the most trustworthy information about these topics is women's lived experiences. In-depth interviews were used to try and get a deeper understanding of not just what can be inferred from the experiences these women talk about but also their own point of view, and how they feel about these experiences and their impact on their actions and behaviours. This challenges gendered science which

has previously cast women in passive roles and prohibited them from scientific practices due to being 'emotional' and 'incapable of reason' (Somekh & Lewin, 2006).

Feminist research should have a feminist perspective, not just methodology, and should include an ongoing criticism of non-feminist scholarship and aim to bring about social change; this is called emancipatory feminist work (Somekh & Lewin, 2006). This is in keeping with the aim of the current research to bring light to what barriers the university's female athletes currently face, so that interventions can be put in place to allow women a more positive experience in sports. As Somekh and Lewin (2006) state, feminist research aspires to be just as much about women as it is for women. Weiner (2004) gives three main principles as a guide to feminist research, with the first stating that it should include a critique of the assumptions about women and the forms of knowledge that are dominant that have previously been unexamined. The other principles state that feminist research should be committed to improving opportunities for women and girls, and that research should develop professional and personal practices that are fair for women at the forefront of its focus (Weiner, 2004).

In accordance with this, and to be able to critique assumptions and dominant forms of knowledge, Somekh and Lewin (2006) state that research must understand feminist theories, or 'feminisms'. Therefore the current research is underpinned with the feminist theories outlined in the preceding literature review section, such as hegemonic masculinity and Butler's theories that explore how gender is socially constructed. Gender identities, and the differences and dominations in 'femininity' and 'masculinity' are central to all aspects of the current research, from the research question, conceptualisation and the analysis, which is what qualifies the research to be described as feminist (Somekh & Lewin, 2006).

As mentioned earlier, the current research uses both structuralist and post-structuralist thinking tools, with structuralism more aligning with a positivist approach. However, with the thesis using the post-structuralist theories of Butler and Foucault, an interpretivist position is more appropriate. Post-structuralism acknowledges the impact of society and structures on people's actions but sees that individuals have agency and are not totally controlled by external factors. Foucault (1988) identifies

this in his concepts around ‘practices of freedom’ that allow individuals to deconstruct dominant discourses and create reverse discourses. Butler’s (1990) theory of gender performativity views the way we perform gender as a more political and conscious act, not just one that is subconsciously learned and repeated. Therefore, an interpretivist position was most appropriate for the current research as it also views individuals as conscious beings who make their own choices (McNeil, & Chapman, 2005). In addition to this, feminist methodologies align with an interpretivist approach as they are both interested in the thoughts and feelings of women as individuals and their unique experiences.

Participants and sampling

Participants were recruited through flyers and posters around the university, with a brief summary of the study and contact information, specifically at the sports centres to target the university’s female athletes. Individuals expressing interest were then provided a full information sheet (Appendix 1) and consent form (Appendix 2) so individuals could make a fully informed choice on whether they wish to participate. Interviews took place in mutually agreed semi-private settings, securing participants’ confidentiality whilst also ensuring the safety of interviewer and participant by being in a semi-public space.

The sample size was 12 participants, allowing for a reliable data sample whilst remaining manageable as the interviews’ in-depth nature required significant time to complete for each participant (ranging from 19 to 57 minutes in length). Furthermore, this is in line with broader guidance provided for qualitative research projects of this type (Sparkes and Smith, 2014; Jones and Gratton, 2015). However, more participants had volunteered, but due to the Covid-19 lockdown, a number of interviews had to be cancelled. As face-to-face interviews could no longer take place, some of the interviews were rearranged to phone interviews but some participants were not responsive to communications and were therefore cancelled. As Adams et al (2014) states, phone interviews are convenient; however, there is often a feeling of time pressure resulting in the interviews feeling rushed. This was noticed during the phone interviews which meant that the data collected was likely not as rich as from the previous

interviews. The age range of the participants was 19-23 years. Participants were current students, and were or have been a member of a sports team at the university; this was not limited to any certain sports, and participants did not need to have been playing their sport for a certain amount of time or level of competition.

The risk to participants was minimal. There was a possibility of some psychological risks as the interviews could have raised some experiences involving gender discrimination and bullying, but this was not evidence in the interview process. Nonetheless, to manage this, participants were reassured that they need only share what they feel comfortable talking about and will not be pushed to share experiences that upset them. In the unlikely scenario that the discussion caused severe emotional or psychological distress, the participants would have been signposted to the appropriate support services at the university for immediate support. Participants were informed that they could drop out at any time before the interview or during it. Furthermore, any participant wishing to retrospectively withdraw their consent to participate in the study were afforded the option to have their data permanently deleted.

Data collection

Semi-structured interviews were held with 12 female athletes from the university. Each participant completed one interview lasting between 19-57 minutes. The interviews (Appendix 3) consisted of questions centring on: a) what the words 'feminine' and 'masculine' mean to them; b) how they believe their peers perceive female athletes; c) their experiences in sport as a female throughout their life and at university; and d) how these experiences have influenced how they act now. It was decided that interviews would be the best method of collecting data as they are viewed not just as a window into social reality but as an actual part of that reality (Czarniawska, 2004; Silverman, 2006). This allows for them to be less structured and yield a vast amount of rich qualitative data rather than the generally quantitative data that questionnaires produce (Adams, Khan & Raeside, 2014). Furthermore, questionnaires are often carried out without the researcher being present; although this can be helpful and allow for more honesty from some participants, the researcher is an important element of the interview process and ensuring that 'rich' data is obtained (Jones, 2015). Richer data can be acquired

as the interviews in the current research were semi-structured, allowing the researcher to probe for more information and depth on certain aspects, giving more opportunity for the participants' answers to really explore the 'why' (Yin & Campbell, 2018). A semi-structured approach allows for the researcher to create a roadmap for the interview and then produce more questions depending on the participants response (Adams, Khan & Raeside, 2014).

Somekh and Lewin (2006) suggest limitations that arise through the researcher being present can be overcome through the researcher taking the time before the interview starts to introduce themselves and build some trust and rapport. This also enabled the interviewer to get the most out of the participant, helping to deal with a scenario where sensitive information is covered (Somekh & Lewin, 2006). Interviews were appropriate for this research question as the concepts that are being explored are not appropriate to be measured and quantified, and each participant is likely to have had a unique experience; this ensures each interview is no less valuable than the next (Jones, 2015). Therefore it is more important and valuable for this research to obtain a smaller amount of in-depth information about the athletes' experiences, thoughts and feelings. However this does mean that the sample size was smaller and therefore not representative of the wider population. In addition to this, the quality of the data is totally dependent on the responses that the participants give, where issues of misperception and difficulty recalling can arise (Jones, 2015). However, gaining rich information about the participants' unique experiences and negotiations of gender identity outweighs these limitations and therefore makes interviews the most appropriate method for the current research.

Jones (2015) state that to improve the quality of the data the interviewer should take into account: a) if the interviewee has any motives or desire to please the interviewer that could influence how they respond; b) what barriers there may be limiting spontaneity; and, c) any other distinctive features that could change the responses. Adams, Khan and Raeside (2014) also suggests beginning the interview with general simple questions to put the participant at ease before moving onto the more in depth, sensitive questions. Therefore, for the current research, before each interview the participants were

reassured that although they are university students taking part, the answers they give will have no impact on their course or grades as it was all completely anonymous.

Data analysis

To analyse the data both a narrative and thematic analysis was conducted. Czarniawska (2004) states that it is beneficial to view an enacted narrative as the archetypal form of social life, and doing so bestows an abundant source of insight. Through a narrative analysis researchers are able to examine both what narrative resources individuals use to construct their stories and how they create accounts of their life (Atkinson, 2012). Narrative analysis is a particularly pertinent choice for studies that are interested in complex, subjective experiences and the intentions and endeavours to find meaning in personal experiences (Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

The objective of a narrative analysis is to thoroughly map out paths of discursive meaning that supply individuals with ways of comprehending the nature of experiences (Atkinson, 2012). Czarniawska (2004) suggests that to understand a society, or a part of society, it is necessary to uncover a repertoire of valid stories and discover how it developed. In a narrative analysis attention is paid to the structure of narratives in accordance to cultural rules as well as the influence of other narratives (Elliot *et al*, 2012). In order to understand how individuals connect with various social institutions and events, it is important to study the way narratives either conform to or resist these influences (Elliot *et al*, 2012). A narrative analyst attempts to incorporate an emphasis on individuals as agents of their behaviour as well as exploring the discursive practices that often go unnoticed but play an important part in creating human experiences (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). It is therefore useful for the current research to use this approach as it explores both the influence of individual agency on negotiating gender identity and the impact of structures on forming 'correct' gender practices.

Sparkes and Smith (2014) suggest that a benefit of using a narrative analysis is that it honours the complexities of lived experiences due to the fact they are case centred, so it can aid researchers in understanding lives in extremely complex ways. In addition to this, narrative analyses are able to

illuminate how individuals or groups' worlds and lives are subjective, and the multi-layered nature of human experiences as they develop over time (Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

However, there are some weaknesses of the narrative analysis method. Firstly, it is difficult to define what a narrative is, and there are various definitions within methodology; therefore carrying out a 'narrative' analysis can be problematic as a result of this (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). It is important to allow participants' stories to unfold at their own pace; however this means a narrative analysis can be a more time consuming process (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Finally, although narrative analyses can allow us to view the complexities of lived experiences, they also run the risk of reducing people's lives to a singular story (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). For the current research, it is therefore important to emphasise that the narratives highlight key events and situations in the participants' lives that allow us to understand how they negotiate one aspect of their lives - their gender identity.

As outlined above, the aim of the current research with using a narrative analysis was to centre the participants experiences, thoughts and feelings. To do this successfully, reflexivity is required from the researcher. Reflexivity refers to the examination and questioning of one's own beliefs and assumptions throughout the research process (May, 2002, Seale, 2007). Reflexivity requires an openness and acceptance that the researcher is part of the research, rather than ignoring it, and is an important way to establish rigour (Finlay, 1998). It is important to acknowledge that researchers may be subjective through unconscious and conflictual forces, not just conscious ones (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000).

As a feminist and sportswoman who has experienced gender discrimination in a sporting context, it was important for me not to assume the participants had the same experiences and opinions as myself. To do this I was careful during the interview process to remain neutral by not suggesting any answers or outcomes, and only asking questions about the participants' experiences. I was very aware of my own biases during the interviews, and feel I could have collected even richer data had I probed some of the participants more and was potentially hindered by trying too carefully to remain neutral.

It was more difficult to remain objective when analysing the data and interpreting the participants' experiences, and I feel my biases come through more in this part of the research. To negate this and make the data more trustworthy, I could have had the participants read their narratives before finalising them. This would have allowed them the opportunity to state whether they disagreed with the analysis, if they felt it was not representative of their experiences or feelings and consequently for less bias to be present.

The data was then analysed through coding and thematic analysis, with themes being determined in a cyclical process between data and theory. They were subsequently allocated to subcategories to create groups which the responses can be split into, with the responses analysed to expose any recurrent patterns. The aim of thematic analysis is to identify general patterns of meaning that exist within the data gathered; the data is examined to find categorical meanings that are present across the interviews (Atkinson, 2017).

This method of analysis is inductive therefore there are no pre-established categories, themes are constructed by the researcher and generated from the data (Macdonald & Armour, 2012). As the data is interpreted by the researcher, themes emerge (Macdonald & Armour, 2012). As Veal (2018) suggests, with a qualitative approach, a theme that emerges from one participant may be just as valuable as a theme which emerges from ten participants. The criteria for identifying themes should be the extent to which potential themes come across as important to the participant (Veal, 2018). Macdonald and Armour (2012) state that using a thematic analysis, collecting the data and analysing it can happen simultaneously, even reading around the subject can help explain themes.

To complete the thematic analysis, once the interviews were transcribed they were re-read and specific quotes that stood out as relevant and relating to the research question were highlighted, with draft notes being made on how these quotes could relate to the theories. Once this was done for all the interviews, the notes were revisited and, using the relevant literature, the quotes were explored and examined to

answer the aims and objectives of the research question. Once all the selected quotes had been analysed, they were grouped into themes, and then subcategories. The analysis was then expanded, linking some of the quotes together and merging some of sections to allow for more depth of theoretical analysis.

An important part of qualitative research is reaching thematic saturation. Thematic saturation refers to the point at which collecting and analysing more data will not lead to any more themes or information relevant to the research question being discovered (Green & Thorogood, 2004; Lowe et al, 2018). There is currently no way of objectively indicating thematic saturation (Lowe et al, 2018). When thematic saturation occurs, further coding is no longer possible; this is likely to happen sooner for smaller studies (Guest et al, 2006). As the current research was a relatively small study in terms of numbers of participants, thematic saturation was feasible; however, the interviews produced a large amount of rich data. Having the interviews as semi-structured also meant that thematic saturation was more likely to be achieved, as this resulted in multiple participants being asked some of the same questions (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Therefore it is believed that the current research reached thematic saturation as it is unlikely further coding would have caused any further themes to emerge.

Results and Discussion

The forthcoming section will firstly provide a narrative analysis of each of the participants' sporting experiences throughout their lives and how they negotiate their gender identity both within and outside a sporting context. It will be explored how contemporary perceptions of femininity and masculinity impact the participants as individuals; their behaviour, actions and the activities they participate in. The narrative analysis is set out in chronological order of which the interviews took place. Due to the narratives drawing upon the individual's unique experiences and the later thematic analysis focusing on shared experiences, there was no need to group the participants and a chronological order was the most fitting.

A thematic analysis will then draw upon the findings that appeared across the participants experiences. In addition to attending the same university, the participants share other experiences that unite them, such as the pressures felt to adapt to beauty standards and the expectation to adhere to certain gender roles. These and additional common themes will be explored in the second part of the discussion.

Narrative analysis

Kerri

Kerri begins by describing how her understanding of both the meaning of, and awareness of others' perception of femininity has developed as she has got older.

...feminine as being like a bad thing nowadays on like both sides... even if you're a girl or a guy, like... masculine, like... they kind of want to blend them together more, is what I think...

Kerri demonstrates how she sees femininity and masculinity as less separate, with people having elements of both. She also states that she views femininity more negatively, suggesting it is more beneficial for women to have masculine characteristics. This is interesting as Kerri implies that rather than society becoming more accepting of women and femininity, it is becoming more accepting of

women who show masculine traits - therefore male superiority is still inferred. Rather than progressing to equality of femininity and masculinity, Kerri perceives that feminine traits are becoming less desirable and therefore women are having to encapsulate more masculinity to be viewed as equals. Not only is hegemonic masculinity dominant among masculinities, its pattern is also becoming more desirable across masculinity and femininity, gaining more dominance and further subordinating femininity (Kimmel, Hearn & Connell, 2005). This is also demonstrated in how she sees sports as limiting athletes self-expression:

...mainstream sports are dude sports or, like, they are all guy sports and so... like... you don't really see females allowed to, I don't know, like express themselves...

This illustrates how Kerri perceives that sport prioritises masculinity. The fact that male sports are seen as the mainstream sports is an example of hegemonic masculinity as sport maintains male dominance with females being seen as second class in this field. As Messner (1992) suggests, sport intends to counter feminisation and upholds an idealised form of masculinity through its aggressive characteristics, instead of allowing itself to be linked with femininity.

Similarly, she argued that in her personal narrative of “growing up.. like, at least in the sports world I wasn't really allowed to be feminine... like it was more you just have to be athletic”; this illustrates that from a young age, Kerri was made aware of how sport is seen as a predominantly male domain by the fact that she was not “allowed to be feminine”. This supports the argument that sport is a key location for the production and reproduction of hegemonic masculinity through denying femininity (Connell, 2012). Therefore male dominance in this field is maintained, and ideologies about strength and skill being exclusively male traits upheld. Kerri's experiences thus resonate with arguments on the historic nature of sport being aggressive and violent, meaning that the introduction of women was largely unaccepted, with those not displaying this form of masculinity being marginalised (Young and White, 2000; Senner, 2016):

...I grew up and started being influenced more by the people around me and by social media. Then I kinda realised that ‘oh, like, it is okay to be feminine and girly, like, within your own sport’...

Only through experiences outside her sport was Kerri shown it is acceptable to be feminine and to take this into her sport. Sport being male-dominated was thus not able to teach her this. This reiterates the fact that the nature of sport aimed to exclude women and femininity (Messner, 1992):

I thought about maybe playing basketball but a lot of the people were, like, always... like, 'well that's a guy sport so, like, why do you want to play that?'.

Here Kerri shows how she has had to change her actions and make decisions based on society's expectations of what is acceptable for women to do within the narrative performance of their gender. There is a discourse around what sports are deemed 'guy sports' despite no specific rules or regulations stating that only men can play them and they are often available to women. However this discourse prevents women from participating or marginalises them if they do take part, supporting the power relation between women and men in sport, with men holding more power (Foucault, 1978).

Ellen

Ellen's view on femininity and gender has also developed as she has got older, from being quite binary, viewing certain sports as only for men, to now having a less rigid outlook on gender.

...when I was younger I would have said probably like I would never have played rugby... I would have always seen that as like a men's sport, whereas now I'm just like its both like it's neither one or the other...my views have definitely changed and become more open to like things being like... rather than like two genders just like one... it's very much more open, rather than when I was younger I don't think I thought that at all...

Ellen's narrative suggests that she currently views the genders as less polar, supporting Butler's ideas around gender being a social construct discursively created and maintained through performances and the activities we participate in (Butler, 1990). For example in the participants experience, she previously performed gender by not participating in certain sports. Whereas now she deems these acceptable activities for both genders, so the 'act' of gender becomes less set, therefore gender in of itself becomes more open.

The development of her views on gender is likely caused by her narrative of growing up, where girls and boys have been treated differently:

...changing from like primary school to secondary school, primary school was very much like boys and girls separate. Just in, like, everything... chilling with your friends or, like, doing sport, it's all separate. And then I think that changed, like from going to senior school and everything it's kind of like you can do anything you want. It's a lot more open...

As a young child, hegemonic ideologies are suggested to us in subtle ways as described by Ellen, in school, which is an aspect of civil society (Carrington and McDonald, 2009). Having the girls do different sports to the boys and the nature of these sports would suggest to Ellen that girls and boys have different characteristics and different activities are appropriate for them. Separating the females and males at such a young age, not only highlights differences in children but actively cultivates them through having them practise different activities and skills and therefore learning dissimilar performances of gender (Butler, 1990). Once these gender performances have been learned and practised, the children move on to secondary school which Ellen states is a lot more open.

However, they have already formed personalities and characteristics that are in keeping with hegemonic ideologies of gender and therefore it is unlikely that they will want to participate in activities that are opposing these. Through being socialised in primary school they have not been provided with the tools necessary to be successful across the new variety of activities. Thus, hegemonic structures are maintained under the false impression of this being a choice (Gramsci, Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1998). This is demonstrated in Ellen's views on playing sport at university:

...I think the closest I would have done would have been joining a gym or that's probably about it. Because, like, you have to have the confidence in playing that sport, I believe, before playing it at uni...

Ellen believes that without playing sport previously, she would not have had the confidence to take it up at university. This further demonstrates the system of alliance of the hegemony within the education system, initially providing children with a performance of gender for them to emulate and gradually increasing their opportunities as they get older to garner consent for their ideologies (Hall, 1996).

Ellen explains that one of the reasons why she loves sport so much is due to its competitive nature.

that's why I love sport cause its competitive and it's like, I love it but I think it in the right aspect
it's right

Sport was created to epitomize the hegemonic ideology of masculinity, therefore aggression and competitiveness are at the forefront of its character (McKay, 1997). This was done to keep sport as exclusively male as these were believed to be inherently male characteristics. Masculinity being performed with aggression and toughness has been learnt and replicated repeatedly so that this is what people believe being a man is (Mansfield *et al*, 2018). However as Butler (1997) suggests, there is no evidence to suggest that this behaviour and identity is natural. In contrast to masculinity, this means that for women, performing femininity may not come naturally to them and like Ellen, they enjoy being competitive and participating in sports.

Valentina

As someone who studies biology, Valentina's knowledge on this subject extends to the way she understands women and men in wider society.

For me, well, first of all... like different genes..., I mean, it's just like... um, the, I mean, the difference between the sexes... that's what it means to me...

Interestingly, for Valentina, there is very little meaning of feminine and masculine beyond the biological differences of the sexes. To her, they only relate to the genetic differences - she does not speak about the social construct of gender, or mention gender at all. This is in keeping with Butler's (1997) view that gender does not exist until the act of speaking calls it forth, so it is produced and reproduced through language. This view also influences the way she sees sport:

...in sport nothing like separate..., difference between the sex or between their religion or the way you look.. of course like our physical things, a woman body and man body are so different so that reflects in sport, for sure. But I wouldn't say that when you go training sport someone says 'you're a girl, you go do this,.. you're a boy, do this'...

Valentina is very aware of the physical differences between females and males but she does not see a need for these differences to have an impact on sport. To Valentina, all athletes are equal regardless of sex, religion or appearances and therefore should not be treated differently in sport.

Notably, throughout her interview, Valentina did not reference the different genders as much as the two sexes, possibly due to her background in biology, but also possibly suggesting a rejection of gender roles. Valentina's almost disregard of gender, similarly to Butler's explanation of gender performance, challenges the naturalness of it and further suggests that gender is indeed a social construct (Ravel & Rail, 2007). Valentina has competed in fencing for many years which she states is a "sport that is really equal... so it doesn't really matter if you are a boy or a girl to train". Her participation in this sport has likely founded her ideas on equality and sport, through experiencing first hand how gender and sex should not impact participation or treatment in sport.

Many women excel in sports and find it easy to become competitive and aggressive when necessary, suggesting that these traits are not exclusively male. This is the case for Valentina who explains that when training or competing these characteristics come naturally to her:

I mean I would say that on the piste I am usually... um... competitive. There is always this, like, sport aggression, if I can say it like this, which will never appear in my real life or private one because I mean there's just no reason to.

It is clear that she believes that these characteristics are not just appropriate for men, but are also necessary for women in sport. The demonstration of these characteristics, although seen as an integral part of sport for men, is instead used to marginalise women for not adhering to a hegemonic performance of femininity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Valentina does not allow this to inhibit her performance and clearly values sport above hegemonic ideologies of femininity.

Valentina again challenges whether femininity and masculinity are inherent by explaining how she uses sport as an outlet:

...if I was not playing sport I would say that I would have more problems in my private life. I would feel more aggression there. More pressed by everyone let's say. And when I'm playing sport... um... after that I'm really calm.

Sport is a method for her to release her aggression in a controlled manner and where it is appropriate, otherwise she believes it would manifest itself in her private life and become problematic. This shows how these behaviours are brought out through sport, but not created by sport. Valentina already holds aggression, something seen as a masculine characteristic, but this already exists in her; it does not just come about through participating in what some would see as a masculine activity. This is in keeping with Butler's (1990) suggestion that gender is discursively created and supported through practices and it is not natural (Larson, 2015). It is then upheld by society's collective agreement to maintain it through fearing the punishments that come with not adhering to gendered performances (Butler, 1990).

Ayeisha

Ayeisha's personal narrative begins by explaining how from a very young age gender roles have been suggested to her in various ways:

...even as a child, I was like 'oh I wanna play with dolls' and, you know, toy horses and things like that, whereas my brother was very much 'I wanna play with Nerf guns' and things... I wasn't really encouraged to be outside my comfort zone and do things

Ayeisha gives examples of how she was socialised to consent to hegemonic ideologies from the toys she was given (Brownmiller, 1984). Girls are given dolls, which suggests that a primary role of a woman is to be a mother and homemaker, and boys are given "Nerf guns" which promote and bring out aggressive and violent behaviour. These gender roles reinforce the hegemonic forms of femininity and masculinity that have been idealised and marginalises women and men who do not adhere to them (McKay, 1997). The participant also states how she was not encouraged to try things outside of her

comfort zone, again showing how girls and women are not pushed suggesting they are not valued as much by society and their role within it has already been assumed.

Throughout Ayeisha's personal narrative, gender roles and gender appropriate activities have been heavily suggested to her. One of which was lifting weights, suggested by her school as inappropriate for women; however she still pursues it:

I had a personal trainer who started introducing me to it, then I went to the gym with my mum who got me more into it. Um it's like... I love it and I always try and convince my sister to do it but she's like 'oh I don't wanna get bulky, I don't wanna, you know, be muscly'.

This knowledge would be freely and readily available to her male counterparts but instead costs further time, money and resources for Ayesihsa who had to hire a personal trainer. This highlights how hegemony works to prioritise men and maintain their authority over women (Gramsci, Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1998; Bairner, 2007).

Ayeisha goes on to explain that, despite it not being seen as a 'feminine' activity she loves lifting weights and tries to encourage her sister to take it up as well, however she is afraid of getting "bulky" and "muscly". This links to Butler's theory of the heterosexual matrix and how the way the body looks holds meaning to others. There is the assumption that looking muscular is for heterosexual men and homosexual women as this is culturally intelligible and how society makes sense of others (Butler, 2006). Thus creating a fear for others to have this appearance as they will be misinterpreted, and in the case of muscular women, marginalised due to both sexism and homophobia for not fitting into the 'feminine ideal'.

I am very competitive and I can get quite aggressive as well...And as a goalkeeper, I actually prefer it when we do mixed training with the male goalkeepers.. for goalkeepers, the boys actually progress faster than the girls because a little boy is more likely to want to throw himself on the ground and you know just chuck himself round than a girl... it's really important that we see the men that are able to do these things and it's like 'wow, I wanna do that!'. But girls my age didn't do because they were like 'oh, I don't wanna throw myself around... I don't wanna run out and be scary'... they just weren't comfortable with it.

This suggests that she links these aggression and competitiveness more to men, and feels more

comfortable behaving in these ways when she is not just playing with women. She then goes on to explain how male goalkeepers progress faster than females due to the fact they are more comfortable with displaying these behaviours. This is an example of hegemonic ideologies of masculinity as boys are encouraged to display such behaviours that are inline with the ‘masculine ideal’ and girls are made to feel uncomfortable displaying them, even when this benefits their performance (Fink, 2015). They therefore unconsciously perform femininity in the way they act and this in turn can inhibit their sporting capabilities (Butler, 1993). Ayeisha also goes on to say how girls don’t want to “be scary”. This use of language feeds into the discourse that women who act competitive and aggressive are “scary” or crazy, whereas men who act in this way in their sport are just good athletes or working hard. The use of language creates a discourse that competitive women are ‘scary’ and negative to regulate society and support men’s position in power (McNay, 1992).

Gabi

Gabi’s narrative outlines the sports she did whilst growing up, encouraged by her parents, were the typically more ‘feminine’ sports; however she believes that her parents would not be so encouraging about the sport she currently does at university, cheerleading:

they were like gymnastics, trampolining... it doesn’t get more, like, ‘just girls’ than that...I don’t really tell my dad I do cheerleading cause he says ‘it doesn’t count’ so I don’t really talk to him about that. So I guess if I chose to do cheerleading at a younger age they would have probably discouraged me.

Gabi is under the impression that her parents, or her dad specifically would not be so supportive of cheerleading. This suggests that her dad judges sport to a standard of masculinity, and with cheerleading being on the opposite end of the spectrum “it doesn’t count”. This means that Gabi has not been able to share her experiences with her dad for fear of being judged negatively for participating in her sport. Judging women and sport by male standards is a method used by the hegemony to idealise a hegemonic form of masculinity and ensure women and more ‘feminine’ sports are seen as lesser (Connell, 2012).

Despite mostly participating in the more 'feminine' sports, Gabi does not see herself, or come across, as a 'girly girl' and has struggled with some aspects of her sport because of this.

all the girls are more girly than I am... They just love the whole dance, the like sass, the thrill of it, the makeup, all wear fake tan. I had never worn fake tan before but you have to, so I was like 'this is ridiculous' but they love it... you have to wear stupid fat bows on your head and they're all like 'ah they're so pretty' and I'm just like 'they just look stupid'. It just gets in the way.. it's not practical.

As well as their athletic and acrobatic skill, cheerleaders are judged on their overall appearance and the dance aspect of the routine. Gabi has struggled to get on board with this side of the sport and states that it is ridiculous and impractical. Gabi does not have experience of or feel comfortable with performing this version of femininity and views it quite negatively (Butler, 1993). However, due to the gymnastic element of the sport and there not being a gymnastics or trampolining team at the university, it is still what she felt most comfortable doing. She expressed that she did not have the confidence to try other sports when she joined the university.

...we just got to sit inside 'cause it was cold outside and only the boys went outside and did rugby and so like I guess coming here you just... I kind of thought 'I'm not even gonna bother, I'm not gonna try'. I did try and do lacrosse... I wish I could have tried other stuff but I just don't have the confidence to. I just don't... dunno... I've just always done gymnastics so I guess that's what I'm familiar with.

Gabi explained that due to the sports she did growing up, and the way that her PE lessons were at school, she did not feel like she would be successful at any other sports and wished she had the confidence to try them. This treatment of the students by the school, an aspect of civil society, in keeping with hegemonic ideologies of femininity and masculinity, meant that Gabi missed out on opportunities and experiences to develop skills (Connell, 2008). As a result of this, when getting to university, she had already been socialised into believing only certain activities were suitable for her, and was not equipped with the skills or confidence to try new sports now they were available to her. Therefore hegemonic ideologies of femininity and masculinity are maintained through practices so that hegemonic masculinity in sport is upheld.

Gabi expresses how she has felt the pressures of hegemonic ideologies of femininity through the expectations on women's appearances:

Oh, for aesthetic purposes I love going to the gym. Yeh I love it. I really wanna be stronger. I just wanna be strong, not necessarily look stronger... yeh, I hate it so much but yeh there definitely is. Just to like wear makeup or jewellery... there's definitely the pressure there, yeh

Here she is expressing how she wants to have a body in keeping with hegemonic ideologies of femininity. This suggests that muscular physiques and strength are still heavily associated with and seen as a performance of masculinity and undesirable for women. Gender performances are often learned and reproduced subconsciously; however here Gabi is demonstrating gender *performativity* through the conscious decision to not look a certain way and participate in activities that create a desired outcome, in this case for her, femininity (Mansfield *et al*, 2018).

Megan

Megan explains how she has been brought up to be aware of forms of femininity and masculinity that very much align to hegemonic ideologies.

I've been brought up with, you know... like, I always associate it with being... like... like, females as, like...not weak, but, like, soft and more fragile. And then masculine's more like hard and, like, tough.

However, throughout her interview she makes it clear that this is only an awareness of these ideologies and she does not subscribe to these views:

...those words don't necessarily associate to that gender or, like, that characteristic...if I were to describe a girl I can describe her, however I want... she doesn't have to be like... oh, soft and delicate...she could be, like, tough but that doesn't mean, like, feminine or, like, masculine.

Megan expresses her frustration at the way that, due to the concepts of masculinity and femininity, many characteristics have been assigned to a gender, which she does not think is right. She infers that this limits the way people can be understood and express themselves, suggesting that people are often perceived within the confines of their gender, femininity and masculinity, yet this may not be a true

portrayal of them. This links to Butler's (2006) suggestion that gender performance is carried out in a way that preserves the 'cultural intelligibility' of gender. Megan states that the way she performs gender has led to others questioning her and making remarks:

I've been called masculine. Like, a couple of people just say 'oh you like come across as very like masculine or anything' but that doesn't really bother me...someone will come up 'why do you act like that'... like, 'why you such a guy'.

Rather than her behaviour just being understood as an aspect of her personality, she is instead labelled as masculine. She does not perform gender in the way that is expected of her. Therefore, because she sometimes performs masculinity, her gender is called into question; as Lock (2006) suggests, to be understood as a 'real' female by society, you must both look and act feminine as well as being heterosexual. Butler (2006) also explains through her concept of the heterosexual matrix that females who perform masculinity are less intelligible to society, and therefore assumptions are also made about their sexuality, being homosexual. Gender, sex and sexuality are signifiers used by society to create an image of a person to be understood (Mansfield *et al*, 2018).

From Megan's experience we can see that the way she performed gender was not what is expected by society from someone of her sex, and therefore caused confusion and her identity to be questioned. Megan claims that this does not bother her; yet she also professes that this has sometimes caused her to change her behaviour:

I always think that I come across as like laddy. Like, I'm just like 'waaay', you know, like. But then it's, like... I've learnt... I've kind of toned that down.

Through being apprehensive of coming across too 'laddy' Megan states that she has learnt to tone down her behaviour so it is more acceptable to others. Due to her performance of masculinity and her gender being called into question she is not able to express herself authentically. The collective willingness of society to perform gender 'correctly' is driven by the punishments that are a consequence of deviating (Butler, 1990). With even those who deviate being coerced back into performing gender in the expected

way, gender's origins of being discursively created becomes hidden or forgotten, leading society to believe it is natural and necessary (Butler, 1990).

However, Megan's justification for the characteristics she demonstrates calls into question the naturalness of gender:

...when you're, like, in the moment and it's, like, you've scored a goal, you're like..you just expel, like... yeah, like, joy or something. It's just naturally I react that way. It's not like 'oh, I saw so and so do that, so I'm gonna do it'. It's not... I think it comes more naturally to me and it's just like 'oh yeah!'. Or, you know, like playing tennis, you know, I get angry...

Megan states that the way she acts comes naturally to her, it is her natural reaction to celebrate a goal or get angry during a sport. Megan's experiences support Butler's (1997) suggestion that there is a distinct lack of evidence to indicate that gender, feminine and masculine identities, are innate. The actualisation of gender comes about when it is spoken of, femininity and masculinity are discursively created through language and practices (Butler, 1997a).

Lynn

Lynn is a rock-climber and cyclist, and has regularly struggled with confidence in sport as a result of comparing herself to her male counterparts due to a lack of female peers and role models:

The first time I realised when girls and boys were different... I think I was about 6...we were gonna play like a football match and they were like 'who wants to play?'...we all get on the pitch and I turn round and there was only the guys on the pitch and I was the only girl... and I didn't understand... that's when I felt odd... 'oh what am I doing that's different'... and I questioned myself...And I was like 'why? why is it just me?'... from then on I realised that like not as many girls do sport.

From as young as 6 years old Lynn noticed the lack of women and girls in sport. Hegemonic ideologies of femininity and masculinity are disseminated throughout our lives and which we learn from the moment we are born (Brownmiller, 1984). This also supports Butler's (1997) argument that gender is a performance that is learnt and replicated, rather than something inherent. From a young age Lynn took an interest in sport, arguably something that was inherent to her, yet the actions of the other women and

girls showed her that this was not an activity typical of performing femininity. Seemingly Lynn had already developed enough of an interest in sport to not be deterred, and she also explained in her interview that her family was very encouraging for her to be active. Despite this, she was still reminded throughout her life and experiences in sport that she was 'other':

...the first person who I remember who I was like 'oh I wanna be like him' it was the I think 2008 Olympics with Usain Bolt...I was like 'that's what I wanna be when I'm older'... thinking back at it I'm like why was he a guy, why would I relate to him...and like everyone that I looked up to they were all guys... now on social media I literally like hunt for girls... like that's why I follow them cause they're girls and I can relate to them...

Due to a lack of female role models growing up, Lynn actively seeks out female athletes to follow on social media as she finds it far more relatable and validating of her own experiences. The media is an aspect of civil society and therefore is used to disseminate hegemonic ideologies (Gramsci, Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1998; Carrington and McDonald, 2009). By underrepresenting women's sport, the media is putting forward ideologies of femininity and masculinity inferring sport should remain in the male domain. Not only is this lack of representation of women present at the top levels, but also in the clubs she has been a part of:

...we don't have a girls team for climbing there was only a guys team and the girls could only do it if we were part of the mixed team... the committee is mainly like male dominated...I've always wanted to compete and they've never questioned it they're like 'no why' like they only ask if they need it for the mixed team. So for them I'm quite angry against them

Coming to university, and one with a large sporting presence, Lynn expected this to be an opportunity available to her; however due to the hegemonic forces at play across the university as a whole, little has been done to rectify this and provide it's female athletes with more opportunities. The male domination within the climbing team is an example of hegemony on a smaller scale, asserting authority and subordinating the women within the club (Connell, 2005; Guilianotti, 2016). As a result, decisions are made in the best interest of the male members allowing male superiority to be maintained. The fact that the women do not get to compete is not even questioned or challenged by anyone other than the few female athletes on the team, highlighting the male hegemony throughout the university as a whole, leading Lynn to feel anger and frustration towards the club and university:

I think I'm not as confident as I should be and I don't tell people how good I am until they've seen it because like I don't wanna be I don't know, say that I'm as good as this and then not manage something so I just, I always say my level is lower than it actually is

In addition to casting a negative shadow over her experiences in sport, the way she views and talks about her abilities adds to the discourse of female inferiority in sport. The negative language she uses about herself, a female athlete, perpetuates the current discourse that females lack athletic ability and strength (Foucault, 1978). Through not wanting to appear overconfident or unable to meet others expectations, she infers that she is less capable than her male counterparts. The continuation of the discourse means that the overarching field of sport remains male dominated.

Nina

Nina was a competitive gymnast throughout her childhood and heavily felt the pressures to adhere to beauty standards both within and outside her sport. Similarly to many of the other participants, her understanding of femininity and masculinity changed as she grew up:

definitely as a child I would have much more like adhered to that whole like girly girls, whereas guys are tougher but as I grew up and understood like... gender particularly is more of a construct and its not actually a thing...

Nina explains that as a child she viewed femininity and masculinity more within the confines of hegemonic ideologies and more firmly consented to these ideas. This suggests that hegemonic ideologies of femininity and masculinity are more heavily pushed during early childhood and that this is when the majority of socialisation occurs (Connell, 2008). Nina learned how to be a “girly girl” and viewed boys as the ‘tough’ ones. However as she got older, like Butler (1997a), she questioned the naturalness of gender and viewed it more as a social construct and to her something that does not actually exist but is discursively created. Here Nina demonstrates how she was able to engage in ‘practices of freedom’ to challenge the discursive formation of gender and break down the categories of femininity and masculinity (Foucault, 1988; McNay, 1992).

Although Nina was able to free herself of some of the behavioural confines of gender performance, she expresses the difficulty of dealing with the limitations gender performance has on the physical body:

I started off a lot more like towards um performance and then it shifted to aesthetic, and I want to shift it back to performance and aesthetic equally cause I don't think without a load of therapy that like I'd ever be like 'oh I don't care what my body looks like' because I mean I do... and a lot of female sports do actually have that kind of pressure...

Nina describes during competing in gymnastics, her focus and motivation for exercising was on physical performance- what her body was capable of. Then when she got older and stopped taking gymnastics as seriously, the focus shifted towards physical appearance. In sports such as gymnastics, for women, and cheerleading, the athletes are not only judged on their athletic ability but also their appearance. As well as the surveillance from judges and coaches, this also results in self-surveillance from Nina, adding more pressure on herself to make sure she adheres to the set standards of physical appearance (Markula, 1995). She states that this self-surveillance is so ingrained in the way she views herself that she will never be able to not have aesthetic goals for exercising, highlighting how difficult it is to challenge technologies of femininity (Wesley, 2001). After she stopped competing the pressure she felt to adhere to beauty standards only increased:

Competing at school I was in such a bubble of just like female gymnasts... when I kind of shifted away from that and then there's just so many more pressures on and people aren't like 'oh wow like she's a good gymnast' it's just like 'oh she's too muscly' ...the pressure's just crazy.

The current beauty standards are in keeping with hegemonic ideologies of femininity and masculinity, therefore the physical representation of strength through muscularity is only seen as desirable in men. Nina expresses the huge amount of pressure she felt to adhere to beauty standards which further shows how much value is placed on appearance for women and femininity. As well as acting feminine, women must also look feminine to be accepted as a 'real' and attractive female, and therefore the body is used to express gender through shape, size and bulk (Caudwell, 2006; Evans, 2006). Women who perform masculinity through having a muscular physique are less intelligible to others in society and as a consequence their sex and gender is challenged, or like Nina, their body is criticised.

Due to the nature of sport, masculine traits such as strength and aggression are sometimes used excessively, leading to toxic masculinity. Nina states how she has had to grapple with this aspect of sport, sometimes leading her to avoid certain activities.

I did actively try and stay away from like more of the male dominant teams even if you're in like a singular female team, ones that have like a big male side to it... there is a like the stereotype...I just wanna stay away from it at, a little bit at uni like naturally, cause I studied sport as well I kind of ended up in that world but yeh it's just a bit too domineering for me.

When Nina joined university she actively avoided certain activities due the reputation lots of sports hold and the stereotypes attached to them. One of which being the 'lad' stereotype, an exaggerated form of masculinity often associated with sports teams. Indicative of hegemonic masculinity, the creation of sport by men for men, sought to exclude women with its hyper masculine characteristics (Connell, 2012). Although since its inception, the harmfulness of these values have been recognised, it is still commemorated by many, meaning that both numerous men and women are excluded through not consenting to these attitudes (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Nina points out that as she studied sport she 'ended up' in this world anyway, showing how sport is often viewed as and indeed is the epicentre of toxic masculinity.

Simone

Similarly to Nina, Simone, also a gymnast who then took up cheerleading at university, has been dissuaded from some facets of sport due to its hyper masculine reputation:

I go to the gym now and do weights more which before I didn't because not, I was like quite intimidated by, by that

Simone explains the gym environment felt very intimidating and prevented her from being able to train there for a long time. A few of the other participants also mentioned how the university gym was often full of "rugby and rowing lads" (Ayeisha) and being quite a small space this was very intimidating. There is a stereotype and discourse surrounding gyms that they are just spaces for huge men to throw

around weights, and unsurprisingly the prospect of this is daunting to both many women and men. Discursive formations are made to support power relations, in this case the power of men over women, and society creates its own forms of knowledge to normalise and regulate itself (Foucault, 1978; McNay, 1992). Therefore the discursive formation of gyms being part of the male domain was created to exclude women and maintain practices that uphold traditional and hegemonic ideologies of gender. If women do not feel comfortable in these spaces then it is less likely they are going to be able to participate in activities that cultivate traits that are seen as hegemonic ideals of masculinity, such as strength, therefore maintaining the 'status quo' (Cahn, 2015).

Simone explains that when she did start going to the gym, strength was not one her goals, and her main motivation for exercising was for aesthetic purposes:

when I like first started going to the gym...I didn't enjoy it very much and that was just for like aesthetic purposes but now it's more like I enjoy feeling strong so it's less about how I look really

Simone describes how various forms of control operate, due to the 'invisible gaze' provided by the media and the way women's bodies are spoken about, she self-surveyed her own body and felt the need to go to the gym to improve her appearance (Mansfield *et al*, 2018; Jette, 2006). With hegemonic ideologies of femininity placing so much value on appearance, it is unsurprising that women like Simone train for this reason. However she states that her motivation for training developed to be more directed towards strength and adds that this made it so much more enjoyable. She expresses how she enjoys feeling strong, a characteristic heavily associated with hegemonic ideologies of masculinity. The organic development of her training towards strength supports Butler's (1997) argument that gender is not natural and inherent. She began training in the gym for reasons that aligned with femininity yet developed an interest in the typically more 'masculine' side of training, for strength, and found this much more rewarding and pleasurable for herself. Simone describes the aesthetic goal that instigated her joining the gym was to lose weight.

mainly to lose weight... when I was on the cheer team I like our uniforms were quite like revealing so it can be a bit like, feel a bit self-conscious. Especially like at varsity we performed and like a lot of people came and a lot of like the rugby team came so it was kind of like a bit uncomfortable.

Due to the cheerleading uniform, Simone felt self-conscious about her body and felt that if she lost weight this would improve her appearance. As a result of having revealing uniforms the athletes self-survey their bodies and strive for the perfect body that meets hegemonic beauty standards (Markula, 1995). Simone explains that she felt particularly uncomfortable when the team performed at the varsity match as the male sports teams were there. The male presence provides another level of surveillance, the 'male gaze', as the emphasis of appearance that is put on femininity is not just to be viewed as desirable, but specifically desirable to men. Hegemonic ideologies of femininity and masculinity are deliberately based on heteronormativity, with a key aspect of them being to be viewed as desirable to the opposite sex (Larsson, Redelius & Fagrell, 2011).

Katherine

Katherine was a competitive rower up until university and has become disillusioned with the expectations of femininity.

I've given up... when you're younger and you're in sport you're meant to like look a certain way but then...in school and there are boys and stuff you're meant to also look another way...it confused me massively cause I was like so I'm supposed to look like this but if I wanna carry on doing what I love then I can't look like that like it's impossible

Katherine states that she has "given up" with trying to adhere to beauty standards and fitting the hegemonic ideal of femininity; being petite and delicate. This highlights how contradicting the ideology of femininity is compared to the ideals of athleticism. Due to characteristics of femininity being imposed on women by society rather than being inherent, it is unfair to expect women to adhere to them, particularly female athletes like Katherine whose sport requires them to perform masculinity more often to be successful (Butler, 1997a). This example shows how gender identity is more limited by social understandings of bodies rather than their biology, as individuals have to choose between being successful in "what [they] love" or being a desirable member of their gender (Gill, 2007).

Katherine's experiences further demonstrate how sport is still largely seen as part of the male domain as she explains that to be respected in the field of sport you have to be seen as 'one of the guys':

I then became a lads lad...obviously if you want to get far in sport you wanna get on with the guys, you have to kind of act like them... I felt like unless I acted like a guy or like got their jokes... then I feel like I would have been looked at and they'd have been like 'oh well, *Katherine's* not that good today'... before sessions I'd be like, do these leggings look alright, do I look alright...I'd do 3 different kind of hairstyles, cause I'd still wanna be seen as a girl but then I'd wanna act like one of the lads

Katherine states that female athletes need to perform masculinity to 'get far' in the sporting world. Sport is so rejecting of femininity that female athletes must perform masculinity so that they can be perceived as more of a male than female and therefore be accepted (Connell, 2012).

Contrasting to gender performance, gender performativity is recognised as a conscious act with a desired outcome (Mansfield *et al*, 2018). Katherine also explains the difficulty of wanting to act naturally and be herself and wanting to be perceived positively by her male teammates, both in the sense of being one of them, a "lads lad", and being seen as a girl and adhering to a desirable performance of femininity. She explains that as a result of this she would either be trying to act the same as them and feel like she was not honouring her true or whole identity, or would make an effort to be perceived as a girl and would consequently be objectified by her male teammates:

I used to wear shorts like for land training and all the guys would stare and they'd be like 'oh you looked really good at training yesterday'... you're either a sexual object or you're one of the guys? Yeh and I feel like it's so conflicted, like all the time you either think one thing or you think the other or you think both

Considering the onus that is put on femininity with appearing desirable to men, it is not surprising that her male counterparts associate a performance of femininity with wanting to be viewed as attractive (Lock, 2006). However it is clear how conflicted Katherine feels and uncomfortable about both performances she feels obliged to engage in. We can see how damaging the objectification of women can be. It not only works to make them feel uncomfortable, like it did Katherine, and potentially deter them from situations such as sport, but acts as a strategy to ensure they are adhering through self-surveillance to hegemonic ideologies of femininity and attractiveness.

Maya

Maya expresses in her narrative that throughout her whole life playing sport she has always been subject to receiving abuse about the appearance of her body.

body shaming...throughout my whole sporting career I have experienced a lot ... the whole body shaming that like the main things... it disturbs me so much. Even till today I get called so many names like cause of my body type like 'you're manly' or 'you're not a girl'... and I feel other girls also get given that, like there's more masculine girls than me and I feel it's, it's not fair

Muscularity clearly relates to strength, and strength is a key characteristic of the hegemonic ideal of masculinity, therefore Maya's appearance represents counter hegemonic values (Connell, 2012). Therefore those who display counter hegemonic attributes are marginalised, leading to punishments such as Maya has experienced of being taunted and body shamed. These punishments operate as a method of coercing those who deviate to adhere to ideologies.

As Maya explains, the body shaming called into question her gender, with people stating that she was not a girl. Performances of gender are used as a way to make sense of other people, masculine females and feminine males are less intelligible to society and are therefore presumed to be homosexual or not a 'real' woman or man (Butler, 2006; Lock, 2006). Despite all the comments that have been made about her, Maya did not change the way she presented herself but she still had to alter some of her actions. She has "isolated [herself] from those that would be talking nonsense like that just try and avoid them as much as [she] can". This allows her to protect herself from these insults but the fact she has to take this extra precaution is an example of discrimination as she is unable to go about her life without having to be concerned by this.

Although Maya saw these comments as 'nonsense', she was still encouraged to change her actions and appearance to avoid them:

even at home to start wearing more girly clothes and then I won't get called all these names... and don't play sports as much because try and stay at home and learn blah blah blah and it's just like why would I, why should I, got told all that crap really

Interestingly, it's not just her appearance that is brought up but her actions and activities, such as sport. Gender is performed through 'doing' masculinity of femininity therefore it is not just our behaviours but the activities we consistently do that construct gender (Roth and Basow, 2004). This suggests how sport is still seen as a masculine activity and a performance of masculinity. Unsurprisingly Maya did not agree with this, questioning why she should have to change her actions when it is others being intolerant and abusive. The fact that it was suggested to her to perform femininity highlights the extent to which hegemonic ideologies of femininity and masculinity are ingrained in society (Larsson, Redelius & Fagrell, 2011). Instead of condemning the actions of those who body shame, it is most people's reaction to suggest she should change her behaviours, almost justifying their actions as she was the one not performing femininity 'correctly' and this further drives the belief that gender is necessary (Butler, 1990). However, Maya's behaviours suggests that gender is not necessary or natural:

I zone out, I'm fully into the sport like focusing on that and how like all the aggression and that comes into place... whereas off court it's more like I'm friendly approachable just personality just but on court it's like enemies-rivals, it competition competition, like everything does fall in as it is competing...Oh yeh yeh, it is natural.

When Maya gets on the court she becomes more focused, aggressive and competitive. Performances of femininity, being quiet, soft and timid rather than confident, are produced and reproduced so that they become unconscious acts, thus veiling that fact that they are constructed rather than innate. However bodies such as Maya's do not always abide by the norms that are imposed on them, destabilizing societies current views on gender, sex and sexuality (Butler, 1993). The destabilisation of societal norms is not often met with open arms, thus leading to the marginalisation or punishment of those who trigger this (Butler, 1990).

Caitlin

Caitlin has played Netball since she was young, as this is a female sport, most of the disparity between the treatment of women and men she has noticed has been through the education system:

more comments are made at school than anything.. boys are just, at that age they're just so cocky... I was someone that would just never put up with it and I know similar girls with my like ability were the same... other girls that just hated PE found it really difficult when it was mixed to be around the boys... they had no chance really of getting involved.

Caitlin explains how she noticed a significant difference in the attitudes girls and boys had to sport and PE lessons when she was younger. It is not surprising that her male counterparts had more confidence, with this being a characteristic associated with the hegemonic ideology of masculinity. This is most prominent in primary school, a key location for the construction of masculinities and when hegemonic ideologies are disseminated most heavily, suggesting an explanation as to why the boys became 'cocky' (Mooney & Hickey, 2012). As we can see this had a knock on effect to many of the girls in the class as they were excluded from getting involved in sport and PE when the lessons were mixed.

Fortunately for Caitlin, she developed a deep interest in sport from a very young age and was encouraged by her parents, meaning this was not enough to deter her.

they would go to the back of the queue whereas myself and the boys would like be fighting to be at the front of the queue to bat or for the best positions when you were fielding

This shows how Caitlin, through her own love of sport and most likely the encouragement she received from her parents, was able to cultivate enough confidence to match that of the boys and not be discouraged by them. Her actions suggest that she performed masculinity more often, or especially when participating in sport, and therefore was more accepted, or had a slightly easier time being accepted than the rest of her female classmates. The pursuit of women's sport is often seen as undermining and questioning assumptions and norms that have been created around the 'natural' female body, as female sport is recognised as a public display contradicting gender ideals (Linder, 2011). Through building these skills she had enough confidence in her ability to not be deterred by her male counterparts' domineering behaviour, as she goes on to explain, sport is where she feels most confident and comfortable:

...I'm confident on the netball court, I'm confident most of the time playing frisbee but I'm definitely not as confident when it comes to kind of being in uni lectures and things like that I'm not as outgoing as I am whilst I'm playing sport.

Through being heavily involved in sport throughout her life, Caitlin has been able to build lots of confidence from this, however she explains this has not always translated into other areas of her life. Hegemonic ideologies of femininity suggest that women are better suited to academic roles rather than physical roles and should therefore pursue them (Connell, 2008). However Caitlin's experiences contest this. The fact that she does not feel as comfortable in the classroom along with the attributes such as confidence and skill in sport that she has obtained, suggests that gender roles and performances are not natural or inherent (Ravel and Rail, 2007). Girls and women are regularly encouraged to pursue careers outside of sport, but we can see from Caitlin's experiences how detrimental this would be to her future. Sport is clearly where she would be able to excel most as well as where she would be happiest.

Summary

From the above narratives it is evident that although all the participants' experiences in sport are unique, they have all been shaped and influenced by their gender. Many of the participants' views on femininity and masculinity evolved as they got older, mostly becoming more open to viewing gender as fluid rather than two opposing identities. As female athletes, multiple participants struggled with their body image, grappling with ideals of femininity and having a strong muscular physique, which is evident from their narratives that this is still viewed as 'manly'. In addition to this, some of the participants felt the burden of gender roles and expectations and were aware that sport is not often viewed as a viable option for women to pursue, therefore they are regularly perceived as 'other'.

Thematic analysis

Introduction

The following section will examine the themes that emerged across the interviews; similar experiences and perceptions the participants shared. Themes that will be explored are; gender roles and performances, hegemonic masculinity and male superiority in sport, and finally hegemonic masculinity and male superiority in university sports. These will be broken down into subcategories to understand each facet in more detail through applying the relevant concepts discussed in the literature review.

1) Gender roles, performance, femininity and masculinity in society generally

Gender roles and performance

All of the participants were asked what the words ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ mean to them, and although many stated that they do not necessarily agree with it, they were aware of them being associated with certain roles and ways of behaving:

...not that I believe in any of this... stuff at home or, like, at work, like lifting stuff... cleaning that people would deem as like masculine and feminine... (Ellen, hockey player)

Stereotypically... feminine is like girly or like motherly. And then masculine is like strong and aggressive... like being a leader, which is like obviously a big...stereotype... but I think it does get applied quite often... (Nina, gymnast)

Ellen and Nina explain how femininity is often linked to the role of homemaker; being a mother and taking on tasks such as cleaning and cooking. In contrast to this the participants describe the role of a man to be doing the more physically strenuous tasks and that of a leader. It is still widely accepted that a male should work and be the ‘breadwinner’, with a career not being a priority for women as much as being a mother and taking care of the home, despite this causing much discontent in women (Freidan, 1963). These hegemonic expectations have clear consequences and are restrictive for both women and men. Women are made to feel guilty for putting a career before family, and men are shamed for wanting to work less and raise a family or take on home responsibilities. A stigma still remains around women and men participating in roles that are not historically for their gender (Connell, 2005).

Consequently, sports remain gendered with certain ones viewed as either ‘feminine’ or ‘masculine’:

the boys would always go off and get to do rugby, and it wasn’t even an option that girls would want to do that. And so the girls just kind of were left inside doing dance... not really doing dance but we just got to sit inside ‘cause it was cold outside... (Gabi, gymnast/cheerleader)

This suggests that the words feminine and masculine are too intrinsically linked with gender that they still have connotations of what is appropriate for women and men to participate in. This is also reinforced in schools, an aspect of civil society, through the curriculum as Gabi states, girls and boys were not able to participate in the same activities (Connell, 2008). Therefore the use of the words can still act as a barrier to women and men to access such sports due to the discourse being created and maintained through language and practise (Foucault, 1972).

To combat this Gramsci uses the concept of a war of position and war of movement proposing a complete reconceptualising of gender roles whereas from this experience we can see that a socialist feminist approach, reevaluating the roles women have been given and giving them equal worth as men’s roles could be more beneficial (Diamond and Ornestien, 1999). This would remove gender constraints and, relating to this example, allow the girls to be taken seriously in sport and for boys to want to focus on other things without any stigma.

From the participants' experiences, we can see that there remains a pressure and expectation for girls and women to perform femininity and therefore participate in activities associated with this. Maya explains how females are encouraged to to pursue avenues outside of sport:

there’s more pressure on females to do other stuff rather than focus on a sport...All the gist of getting married... settle down, have kids blah blah blah. Whereas a man they can play sport, earn from the sport, ‘cause they get paid higher wages. (Maya, basketballer)

Hegemonic ideologies of femininity and a woman's role as being primarily in the home are still common and widely acknowledged. As Woolf (2019) states, marriage was the only profession available to women up until the early 20th century, and this way of living has been inherited to be prevalent now.

As the participant states, men have more opportunities available to them due to this, as with sport they get paid significantly more and therefore it is seen as a viable option for them, unlike for women. Despite having more than marriage available to them now, discriminatory hegemonic attitudes and structures such as income mean that not all these supposed options are actually viable for women (Connell, 2012).

As well as societal structures putting women at a disadvantage, Maya explains how traditional ideologies are still prevalent and therefore many routes are less viable for women through assumptions being made about their interests and future desires. Maya highlights how because of these attitudes girls can be influenced more locally by family or teachers that pressure them to pursue avenues they deem more appropriate for women. This demonstrates how successful civil society is at disseminating hegemonic ideologies so that they become the norm, that even currently these views still stand (Gramsci, Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1998). This also makes a strong case for the need for a 'war of position' as it shows that change cannot truly be facilitated until a large majority hold counter-hegemonic views (Mayo, 2005). This would be in keeping with both radical and socialist feminist views that would see a war of position as beneficial, allowing for a reconceptualising of gender roles which would in turn give equal opportunities to both men and women across all sectors, including sport (Levy & Egan, 2002).

Although these views remain pervasive, it cannot be ignored that there has been progress since 1919, as Valentina describes:

society also, uh, betterises the women to be like determined... nowadays. Especially because like the woman can do everything... she can be superhero, work, uh, have kids, be mother... (Valentina, fencer)

Women are shifting the discourse around what is seen as acceptable for them. Not only this but to an extent enabling it to be perceived in a positive light by wider society. Through engaging in 'practices of freedom' women have questioned the formation of dominant discourses and power relations, viewing

them critically and seeing how they are problematic, allowing them to form new ones (Foucault, 1988). Through providing depictions of women in various roles outside the home, using language outside the limitations of what is usually used to describe femininity, and through practices such as participating in sport, women have been able to form reverse discourses to challenge traditional gender roles.

Gender roles, appearance and agents of gender socialisation

Gender roles are limiting to both women and men. However, it is not just certain activities and responsibilities that are expected by society, but also ways of being and acting in accordance to ideologies. We see this in the example given by Gabi describing the difference in reactions to competitiveness in women and men:

...boys get away with it... boys, um, I dunno how they do... I think about this often... I always think if I did that, it would just be so different but they just... it's like funny when they do it but if a girl did it, all the boys would go 'oooh she's getting stressed, she's on her period'...it's definitely seen differently but it depends on the girl. It depends if the girl's more like that they can get away with it more. (Gabi, gymnast/cheerleader)

It is still assumed that hegemonic masculine traits are inherent to men so when a woman displays them it is seen as unnatural and wrong (McKay 1997; Connell, 2012). Interestingly, Gabi adds that if the girl is "more like that", she can get away with it. This suggests that if a girl more often performs masculinity and is perceived as more masculine, they are more likely to have this behaviour accepted. If they are seen as 'one of the lads' then it is not questioned, but if the person is perceived as more feminine, the juxtapositioning of 'masculine' behaviour results in dispute.

As Butler (1997) suggests, gender performances are produced and reproduced, there is very little to suggest they are inherent (Mansfield *et al*, 2018). Therefore to expect women and men to only possess certain qualities is extremely limiting and damaging when deviating from the assumed performance results in punishment and marginalisation (Butler, 1990). Particularly in sport, a certain amount of aggression is seen as a key component and therefore to expect women to not show such traits based

purely on the grounds of their gender will only hinder and discourage them from participating in it, highlighting how sport is used as an apparatus of gender hegemony (Connell, 2012). This double standard and expectation for women to constantly perform a version of femininity that aligns with hegemonic ideologies only operates to discriminate against them and maintain male superiority.

All the participants spoke about the pressure put on women to look a certain way and how much value is placed on a woman's appearance. For many of the participants, femininity is so closely linked to physical appearance and 'beauty' that it holds very little meaning outside of this:

feminine generally means like you're more like kept... like you look prettier... you embrace like what makes you feel like pretty on the inside and on the outside (Kerri, volleyballer)

Here Kerri states that there is an emphasis on appearance with femininity. This links to Foucault's concept of the 'invisible gaze' and surveillance, with women constantly self-surveying their appearance and attempting to make themselves 'look prettier' (Mansfield *et al*, 2018). Her statement that femininity means embracing what makes you pretty 'on the inside and out', suggests it goes beyond aesthetics and extends to a way of being. This links to Butler's (1990) theory of gender performance; how characteristics and ways of acting are a performance of femininity.

This could also be seen as an example of emphasised femininity which is based on paying a large amount of attention on appearances, wanting to come across as pretty and fashionable (Cockburn & Clarke, 2002). Emphasised femininity is grounded in the acceptance of existing gender relations, this being the dominance of men and subordination of women, meaning that this form of femininity plays into the desires of men (Mattson, 2015). Kerri's explanation suggests how many women may try to gain some form of power through embracing what makes them feel prettier; however, as Connell (1987) states, all forms of femininity are constructed in the context of male domination and therefore cannot challenge the current gender relations.

This acute surveillance of women's appearance has led to a very specific body image being seen as most desirable, which Nina describes as:

...typical hourglass shape but not too hourglass... like 34-24-34 and you'd wanna...have toned legs, but not too muscly 'cause you don't wanna look like a guy. And you wanna have like a nice like toned arse but not, like, too big... everything has to be perfect... But you wanna like do all this exercise, but you still gotta keep your boobs... Yeh, so pretty unattainable. (Nina, gymnast)

Nina's statement that it is 'unattainable', suggests how ideals and female standards are often set by men. They are hegemonic ideologies created in the best interest of men and therefore are often unrealistic for women to actually achieve. Thus they work to marginalise many groups, such as fat women and athletic women. Hegemonic patterns around 'feminine' and female bodies are open to change (Connell, 2009), and as hegemony operates, are based on men's preferences. This 'unattainable' representation again resonates with emphasised femininity as it heavily focuses around heterosexuality and accommodating the interests of men (Connell, 1987; Domeneghetti, 2019). In addition to this, although subordinated by masculinity, emphasised femininity is less marginalised than other representations of femininity, such as those identified above, and is therefore seen as desirable to obtain for women. However, it will never be hegemonic in the sense that hegemonic masculinity is hegemonic among men (Connell, 1987; Paechter, 2018).

Hegemonic or toxic masculinity?

Some traditionally masculine traits have begun to be recognised as harmful to both women and men, as well as society in general, and some of the participants spoke about the effects of 'toxic masculinity'. Characteristics such as aggression and hyper-competitiveness are not always seen as acceptable; however, sport seems to be an aspect of society that remains to protect these behaviours. Kerri explains how a small majority are holding on to and facilitating these traits:

....a small majority do compared to the larger majority...for whatever reason the small majority is what media focuses on... doing all these like weird douchey things that usually

aren't acceptable in society is okay... I think that the toxic masculinity is what's holding onto that and for whatever reason they still have such a strong hold over like athletics and media...I definitely think it's rooted in sport and it comes from sport...(Kerri, volleyballer)

This demonstrates how hegemony and civil society works to disseminate norms and the power this small percentage of society has over the masses (Connell, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). These values and beliefs are mostly held by those who fit the hegemonic masculine pattern, possessing traditional masculine qualities such as strength and aggression (Kimmel, Hearn & Connell, 2005). This means that behaviours many people in society would not see as acceptable are justified and celebrated by hegemonic institutions, meaning it is very difficult for them to be challenged and instead are consented to. Kerri believes that toxic masculinity is rooted and highly concentrated in sports, and as it is also celebrated, it spreads to wider aspects of society. This means that anyone other than the 'masculine males' who are celebrated in sports, such as women and men who have more 'feminine' attributes, are marginalised and seen as 'other' (McKay, 1997). Kerri calls this 'toxic masculinity'; however its characteristics of being the most esteemed form of masculinity but not the most common as well as its ability to subordinate other masculinities and femininity, are characteristics of hegemonic masculinity, suggesting that this is actually what she is describing (Connell, 2005).

It is unsurprising that sport may be seen for many as the root of 'toxic masculinity' with these characteristics playing such a key role in its conception and current practise, but these traits have always existed to marginalise women and continue to do so through hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2008; Connell, 2012). As previously stated, hegemonic masculinity can be just as detrimental for men as it is women. Needing to be perceived as constantly strong, confident and aggressive can unsurprisingly be very damaging. Ayesiha describes how this also leads to pressure on men to look a certain way and fit a certain body image:

...for men it's like 'oh i just wanna be really big', and they wanna be muscly everywhere...
(Ayeisha, hockey player)

This expectation remains fairly constant from traditional ideas and has not changed so much as for women's bodies. However this ideology and expectation for men to show the physical embodiment of 'masculine' traits such as strength and assertiveness is just as detrimental for both men and women (Messner, 1992). Masculinities that do not fit the hegemonic pattern are less valuable and subordinated in society (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), and in many cases, those with more 'feminine' bodies are assumed to be homosexual, as explained by Butler's heterosexual matrix (Butler, 2006). Homosexual men have been positioned at the bottom of the gender hierarchy among masculinities due to their close affiliation with femininity (Connell, 2005).

As well as body image, Nina explains how 'toxic masculinity' can affect not just men's physical wellbeing but their mental wellbeing:

... for the male athletes that definitely leads into like toxic masculinity... they have to be this really strong... and they can't have any kind of moments of weakness. (Nina, gymnast)

This leads to them being criticised for being 'weak' or 'sissys' and not living up to the expectations of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005). Showing opposing traits is deemed as a performance of femininity and therefore men who act in this way are often perceived as homosexual as Butler's (1990) concept of the heterosexual matrix suggests. This then leads to further marginalisation due to homophobia which is highly concentrated in the field of sport as a result of hegemonic masculinity. 'Toxic masculinity' has become a widely used term; however, from the participants' use of it, and through comparing it with the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity, we can see that they are extremely similar, and that what in the participants are describing very closely relates to 'hegemonic

masculinity'. The participants specifically draw upon the harmful effects hegemonic masculinity can have on society.

2) Hegemonic masculinity, male superiority and female inferiority in sport

Appearance / sexualisation in sport

Simone feels like there is a double-standard for women in sport when it comes to appearance:

...they literally just focus on what they're wearing all the time... 'they're not wearing anything'... like, 'they're showing too much skin, they look like baby prostitutes'. Yeh it's just like they don't focus on that when rowers are walking around with...no shirts on. (Simone, cheerleader)

The same criticisms are not offered up for the same actions when it is men doing them, suggesting how hegemonic masculinity operates within sport to legitimate the subordination of women (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The problem for those who criticise is not with the actions, but with the women. The examples Simone gives also shows how athletes are sexualised and infantilised, by comparing them to 'baby prostitutes'. This is another tactic used to undermine their athletic ability in an attempt to maintain male superiority. A similar experience was had by Nina:

...spectators would be like 'why do they wear stuff like that?'... 'why do they dress like little prostitutes?'... actually it's not us that chooses to look like that - that's actually the sport that puts us on it. (Nina, gymnast)

The hegemony of gymnastics and various other sports set these uniforms that are revealing and draw attention to the female athletes appearance; they are then used against the athletes to criticise them and diminish their athletic ability (Connell, 2002; Mullins, 2015; Trolan, 2013).

This sexualisation in sports leads to the self-surveillance of women, linking to the participants' ideas around femininity again suggesting that the purpose of women is for the male gaze (Beauvoir, 1949). This form of surveillance shows how it is used as a state apparatus to regulate women's bodies and highlights how decisions are made in the best interests of men, supporting those in power (Foucault, 2008; Mansfield *et al*, 2018). Kerri states that it makes it "really distracting to perform" and makes her

feel self conscious, showing how this choice of kit only empowers the men who watch on the sideline and as she informs us, “catcall”, inhibiting the performance of the athletes.

It is not only uniforms that female athletes are subject to criticism for, but also their athletic physiques due to looking too ‘manly’. The majority of participants have received criticism for looking ‘too muscular’, or are at least aware of other female athletes having or fearing this criticism:

...people will make like... ‘no one wants an athletic body’ and ‘it takes away their femininity’, and stuff like that... everyone goes ‘but don’t do that because then you’ll get bulky and then you’ll look like a man’. (Katherine, rower)

Instead of being accepted as a by-product of their sport and celebrated for their athletic achievement, women’s muscular bodies are instead attacked. This is a result of a strong muscular body being counter to hegemonic ideologies of femininity, such as being soft and delicate (Messner, 1992). The fact that so many people still view strength and muscularity as exclusively male shows how traditional ideologies about femininity, masculinity and gender roles are still very much ingrained in society, pertaining to the effectiveness of civil society (Smith & Wrynn, 2013). They are not so much a thing of the past but very much contemporary. This in turn affects the way they train and consequently their athletic ability:

they don’t train their upper body or lower body ‘cause they’d be like ‘oh I look more of a man’... they don’t tend to put in as much effort or work as they should. (Maya, basketballer)

As Butler (1990) states, the behaviours we exhibit, activities we do and the way our body looks all contributes to our gender performance. Participating in sport and building a muscular physique creates a performance of gender that is understood most widely by society as the performance of a man. Women do not want to become ‘bulky’ and muscular from sport as this is a more ‘masculine’ attribute and seen as only desirable on a man (Young and White, 2000). Not only is this consenting to ideologies of femininity but it results in gender performativity, as they are actively choosing what to participate in that will exhibit femininity. Butler (1990), refers to this as ‘corporeal style’; the idea that people can not just act feminine but they must also look feminine to be acceptable (Evans, 2006).

Hegemonic masculinity, male superiority & female inferiority in sport - the discourse of 'biological determinism'

With sport being an arena where female and male bodies and their capabilities are put on display, it is commonly used as an institution to affirm the male body's superiority (Messner, 2005).

Yeh, I definitely think female sports are kind of looked down as being, like, weaker overall even now...it's like Carly Lloyd... she's on a US women's team for soccer... kicked a 50-yard field goal and ...everyone's like 'well, girls like still can't do that'... it's like, 'we can', even though like we're looked down on as being like less athletic... (Kerri, volleyballer)

Kerri explains how there is a current discourse around women's athletic ability, that they are weak, despite there being actual evidence that women are capable and skilled in sports. People continue to believe and state that women 'can't do that' to fuel the current discourse that works to support the dominance of men and marginalise women (Foucault, 1978). Their actions and language connect into theoretical formations that suggest men are more capable and successful in sports (Foucault, 1972).

It is widely known that females and males have biological differences, such as hormone levels, meaning that women and men compete separately in sports. However this is often used as an argument against the participation of women in sport. As Ayeisha explains:

'oh, you know, if men and women are equal, why don't they compete against each other?' It's not that they shouldn't do it because they aren't equal - it's because their biology is completely different. (Ayeisha, hockey player)

Ayeisha gives an example of how people attempt to use biological determinism to subordinate women in sport. This is extremely detrimental as it suggests that the only purpose of sport is to compete at an elite level, yet sport has a much more complex place in society with it also being a cultural and social activity. It also creates a very binary view of the female and male bodies and presumes all men to have a genetic predisposition to be a good athlete and the opposite for women (Connell, 2002). We know this not to be the case as such 'biological advantages' vary across females and males and there are so

many other factors than just a person's biology that affect their skills and preferences (Connell, 2002). Yet this is often used as a way of deterring women from participating in sport and adds to the discourse of women being weak and unathletic (Foucault, 1972).

This argument is so widely used that female athletes often question their place in sport as a result of it.

As Lynn and Katherine explain:

...as a girl you feel like you're not very good... well, I feel really like that I'm not a very good climber when actually it wasn't that. It was just that they were guys and had... they were stronger in some areas... I would have liked to have more girls to like compare my level with them... (Lynn, climber)

I know I was never gonna get a same 2km score as the boys. Like, it's quite disheartening 'cause everyone looks at your score and like... 'they did that, why can't I do that? Because I'm a girl, like, I don't have that strength. (Katherine, rower)

Focusing on physical attributes is an example of hegemonic masculinity and shows how the standards in sport have been set by men, for men. Using male standards to compare women's bodies to men's, and judging them based only on their physical abilities is a strategy used to justify viewing women as inferior (Beauvoir, 1972; McNay, 1992). This is also made worse by the fact that there is a much lower number of women in sport, so many female athletes, similarly to Lynn and Katherine only have male counterparts to train with and compare themselves to.

Nina informs us how these views manifest themselves at all levels and facets of sport:

...the discrimination just came that women are just on a lower level. They'll never be as good, like, athletes in anything. You were just kind of seen as a second tier of person. It wasn't even about ability or the injustices within the sport, like different rules for men and different rules for women. It was just like a culture of 'yeh, women just aren't as good' (Nina, gymnast)

The aforementioned views on the female and male body have created a very deterministic attitude towards women's sport for many, as Nina describes. As well as the structural aspects mentioned, such as different rules, Nina states that the harshest form of discrimination comes from the belief that women are just "a second tier of person" and will never be seen on the same level as men. This supports the

notion that sport is used to promote masculine imagery and cultivate gender hegemony (Connell, 2012). As an aspect of civil society, sport has successfully been used to disseminate ideas about female inferiority, meaning that even when women are successful in sports, these attitudes prevail (Gramsci, Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1998). The hegemonic ideology that women 'are just on a lower level' has become the norm and current culture. Despite there being lots of progress in terms of the structures that have historically caused discrimination, discriminatory attitudes are seen by Nina as the biggest obstacle. This highlights that as Gramsci outlines, a war of position is necessary before a war of movement (Gramsci, Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1998). If the majority of society still have hegemonic ideals then change cannot be successfully facilitated.

Due to the discourse around biological determinism, female success and ability in sport is often called into question. As Megan and Katherine explain, when a female athlete achieves something, the first reaction of the public is to suggest they are cheating:

...obviously there's that Bolt dopes and stuff like that, everyone's like 'it can't be true, it can't be true'. But as soon as a female athlete gets a gold, it's 'well, we have to check that she's not doping'... that's how it looks to me sometimes. (Katherine, rower)

In alignment with the current discourse around a lack of athletic ability amongst women, these actions and attitudes create a discourse around any athletic ability shown by women to be unnatural and not genuine, further perpetuating that they are 'weak' (Wesley, 2003). Discourses are formed to support specific regimes of power, which in sport has historically been and currently is male dominance over women (Foucault, 1978). Therefore, these discourses that reinforce the notion that females are inferior in terms of sport work to support male dominance and further operate to marginalise women from the sporting field (Foucault, 1978). Attitudes such as these towards female athletes are particularly harmful as they not only suggest that females have no place in elite sport, but they also work to undermine female athletes when they are successful at an elite level.

Kerri points out how even at an elite level, male teams seem to be prioritised, highlighting male superiority in sport:

...American football they build like these gigantic stadiums and so it's just a huge, like, testosterone fest. And they go out and like tackle people, and they're like "oh yeah, I'm big and buff, and I just tackled you" (Kerri, volleyballer)

A huge amount of money is invested in elite level male sports, and this form of masculinity, emphasising strength and aggression, is celebrated (Messner, 1992). Again, we see hegemony operating through funding, clearly showing that those in positions of power value the hegemonic form of masculinity, thus making it normative in attitudes rather than enactment (Connell, 2012). As Maya states, the underfunding of female sports results in sport not being a viable career option for women:

...females have no career out of sport. Basically, they don't really get the chance... So there's less opportunity and less chance for them to succeed usually in sport, so I think the discouragement comes from there... (Maya, basketballer)

Through the huge disparity between pay and funding into womens and mens sports, attitudes supporting male dominance and female subordination filter down to the amateur and novice levels (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Without having successful female role models in sport, whilst there are so many in men's sport, leaves few incentives for girls and women to get into sport initially.

Media impact on gender

All of the participants expressed how the media plays a large role in influencing ideas about femininity, from how athletes are portrayed in traditional media to what is trending on instagram. All of the participants felt that the way the media portrayed female athletes differed to its portrayal of male athletes and focused considerably more on their appearances, as Kerri explains:

...it's not what their athletic performance ever is... like, well she looked good while doing this... and oh by the way, in parentheses, she like broke this record right or we are always are coming second to what men want... article that came out and it was like, um, a men's swimming team got second and Ryan Lochte got second and Missy Franklin made the new world record for the women's 800, but like it was, like, down in parentheses right. And so, in theory, the gold medal should be higher up than the silver, but because it was male athletes they went first. (Kerri, volleyballer)

Kerri gives more examples of how female athlete's sporting ability and achievements are played down and their appearances brought to the forefront of the conversation. The media is an aspect of civil

society, so here we see ideologies about femininity and a woman's place in society being suggested through their portrayal (Gramsci, Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1998). This clearly implies that it is more important for a woman to look good whilst doing sport than be skilled in that sport. The media, through focusing on the athletes' appearances, also provides women with an 'invisible gaze' so that they compare themselves to the bodies they see in publications and aim to look like them (Jetter, 2006; Markula, 1995).

Having women's achievements always coming second to men's adds to the idea that sport is primarily for men and should remain in the male domain, which again works to alienate women who participate in sports. The language that is used by the media that celebrates men's achievements and barely acknowledges the women's greater accomplishments, forms the knowledge that the men are more skilled and capable when this is not the reality (Foucault, 1972):

...they definitely sexualise female athletes but it really depends on what media it is. You can't always trust it and you kind of take that with a pinch of salt... it is quite bad, female athletes are just like... more skin is shown in photos and they'll say something that's not relevant. (Gabi, gymnast/cheerleader)

Here we see how the media disseminates ideologies of femininity; prioritising women's appearances and sexualising them as a way of undermining their athletic achievements (Mullins, 2015; Trolan, 2013). Here we see how women are simultaneously idolised for their appearance, yet patronised about their sporting achievements (Millet, 1970).

As well as a difference in the way they are portrayed, the majority of participants agreed that female athletes are also significantly underrepresented by the media. Megan explains how even at the highest levels, it can be difficult to find coverage of women's sports:

Like put it simply there's not a lot of airtime... for example Arsenal women's, Manchester United women's, I wouldn't know really where to watch it... I think that's sad 'cause then it doesn't let...young girls and stuff like aspire to like achieve something like that. Yet they see like football all the time you know in pubs and stuff... it's all men's sport... there's no, like, 'oh it's the women's football league' (Megan, footballer)

The fact that there is so much less coverage of women's sports shows how they are still seen as 'other' and lesser in the sporting field (Senner, 2016). Hegemonic ideologies are relayed by not giving women's sport the chance to be shown and publicised, suggesting that sport is only acceptable for men. As Megan suggests, male hegemony becomes the norm to the younger generations who consequently lack role models in women's sport and therefore do not have anyone to aspire to (Gramsci, Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1998). The majority of the population only see images and videos of male athletes disseminated through the media, an aspect of civil society, and therefore male athletes become the 'norm' and female athletes are seen as the 'other' (Carrington and McDonald, 2009). This method of marginalisation is consented to by the masses as it is subtle, coming across as indirect and therefore could be argued that it is not purposefully or maliciously intended, and so goes unchallenged.

The majority of participants brought up how social media has a large impact on people's ideas about body image and the beauty standards many of them feel women have a pressure to live up to.

I think like social media definitely plays a role. Um, I follow a lot of girls who are like sporty and active, and I'm like 'oh I wanna look like that'. Like you aspire to look like that. (Lynn, climber)

With an abundance of media outlets, all within a hegemonic system of alliance, disseminating the same ideals, norms are soon formed and accepted and ascendancy is gained through the culture and persuasion (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The use of social media has meant that the images women see online has massively increased.

As previously discussed, the majority of participants are acutely aware of the 'look' that is seen as most desirable for women, and this is largely down to social media. In one sense they are even more bombarded with images of the 'ideal' body, but on the other hand there is a wider variety of people and images available. As Katherine explains, women with more athletic figures are becoming more accepted:

Yeh I think at uni people are more interested in gym and especially like social media now, women with stronger more athletic figures are more accepted than what they were before. (Katherine, rower)

Although social media can be seen as an aspect of civil society with many brands and corporations making use of it, it has feminist potential as individuals have most of the control over what they share. The fact that individuals have control over the content that they post makes way for the creation of 'public intellectuals'. These can be either hegemonic, traditional intellectual, or counter-hegemonic, organic intellectual, but allow for a variety of ideologies to be disseminated (Gramsci, Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1998; Mayo, 2005). Although many women who use social media use it to perpetuate hegemonic values, it is also widely used to spread counter hegemonic ideologies of femininity, particularly by those who have been alienated such as female athletes. This allows for increased representation of marginalised groups from an authentic position, rather than from another social group that is sympathetic to the cause, giving them more credibility (Entwistle, 1979; Shirlow & McEvoy, 2008).

3) Hegemonic masculinity, male superiority and female inferiority in university sport

Hegemonic masculinity, male superiority & female inferiority in university sports

Since the introduction of women in sport, there have been fewer blatant structural barriers to participating; the barriers now lie in the form of microaggressions; everyday brief communications that insult women's sporting abilities. Nina goes on to describe an example of this:

...[a senior member of staff] at my university... on one occasion described our female rowing team as 'a social rowing team'. It was in the context of why the novice rowers often train with the female team, and he was like 'that's because it's more of our social rowing team'...this is really sexist because...our rowing team in general is, like, considered the best in the country. Both male and female are, like, international like elite athletes, and therefore to describe international GB rowers as 'social rowers' is like the most patronising thing I've ever heard. (Nina, Gymnast)

Here we see how female athletes are able to participate in sport, reach international, elite level yet are still not seen as successful or taken seriously. Someone who is in a position of power at the university and therefore part of the ruling class, disseminates values and ideologies which filter down to the

masses, in this case the student body (Gramsci, Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1998). It is to be expected that there is a culture within the university that sees female athletes as second class to men when this is the attitude held by those high up.

Many of the participants expressed the belief that the university's male sports teams were significantly prioritised in various ways:

...men get the training times they want for the gym. Like, they're chosen... like, work for their schedule. The girls we get like 7am in the morning, and they get midday and times they'd rather, and I think that's really unfair...we're like in the same league as them and doing better in the league than them, so I just don't understand why they'd get prime times with that. So no, I don't think it is treated like fairly. (Ellen, hockey player)

there's so much more funding into the men's side of it... um, and so much more care into their side of it. So much more publicity into the men's teams...Yes, so it's just not equal in any way. (Nina, Gymnast)

We got put in a higher tier so we kind of like earned our way up and we're deserving of it, not just given, whereas other sports would literally just get given it, like 'here you go, here's a session.' (Maya, basketballer)

Putting more emphasis on male sports suggests that traditional 'masculine' attributes such as strength and athletic ability are only valued for the male students to possess. This highlights how the education systems are gendered organisations and construct gender through their practices (Connell, 2008). This lack of interest in the female sports teams and the prioritisation of the men's teams will deter many people from taking part in sport, which again keeps sport in the male domain. The university gains consent to these ideas by still having a variety of female sports teams available. This enables them to appear as if they are treating women equally thus avoiding conflict or challenge as Gramsci, Hoare and Nowell-Smith (1998) states, the public is unaware of these systems meaning they agree to them even when they result in discrimination. This automatic prioritisation of male athletes displays male hegemony within the university, an aspect of civil society, favouring the men's teams until the women's teams have proven themselves 'worthy' of the same treatment. This highlights sports' tendency to advantage those who most embody hegemonic masculinity, and marginalise femininity (Pringle, 2008; Mooney & Hickey, 2012).

Male attitudes to females - methods of marginalisation and stereotypes

As well as general attitudes and structural inequalities, the participants have experienced discrimination on a more individual level or from specific groups they've had contact with. Many of the participants expressed how throughout their lives they have experienced or seen how men actively try and exclude women in a sporting environment. Megan describes when this has happened:

Never like mixed... we did like twice but it was no point cause you know the guys would never pass and I was just like 'fuck you bro.' Like, I was like 'you know I play!' Like... and then it's like 'get it to Megan'... 'lalala, it's fine'. But then they don't pass it to the other girls. (Megan, footballer)

This is another example of the present discourse around male superiority in sports, through the practise of refusing to play with the women for fear it will "bring the level down". The 'knowledge' that males are more competent at sport is created and upheld by these kinds of practises yet the actuality is that women are at the same level if not a higher level than the men (McNay, 1992). It is not only with training with the women's teams, but as Ellen explains they also do not want socialise with them:

I know some of the girls in the rugby team and thinking 'oh you must'... 'do you like socialise with the mens?... do you do anything with the mens, or do you training or matches together, or like practise or anything?' and they're like 'no, they don't want anything to do with us'. (Ellen, hockey player)

Rugby is seen as one of the most 'masculine' sports and therefore the females that play the sport are some of the most marginalised as a result of presenting counter hegemonic characteristics of femininity (Howe, 2003). This also means that their performance of gender, particularly when playing the sport more closely aligns with a performance of masculinity. This leads to further alienation due to them being less intelligible to society and having their gender or sexuality called into question (Butler, 2006).

In addition to this, as Connell (1987) states, those who represent femininities other than that of emphasised femininity are marginalised to an even greater extent. Women who are not conventionally pretty or who have an image that is assumed to be associated with lesbianism, do not align with

emphasised femininity and therefore are lower down in the gender hierarchy (Cockburn & Clarke, 2002). This is due to emphasised femininity being based on heterosexuality and men's desires, therefore anything outside of this is further subordinated by masculinities (Connell, 1987).

A large majority of the participants, when asked if they knew of any stereotypes in sport, named that of the 'butch lesbian':

A lot of women who are in sport are known as like butch or like lesbian... like... and... or. um... like in football and stuff you see that a fair bit, or like you hear people talking about it. It's like 'oh you're such a dyke' (Megan, footballer)

Out of the 12 participants, 8 stated that women in sport are often labelled as 'butch lesbians', especially those in sports such as rugby and football. The stereotype is more prevalent in the traditionally more masculine sports as doing these sports is a more obvious performance of masculinity; however society understands doing most sports as a performance of masculinity (Cahn, 2015). As Butler's (2006) theory of the heterosexual matrix suggests, women who perform masculinity are understood by others as homosexuals. Women who present feminine characteristics are viewed as 'real women' whilst those who do not are labelled as lesbians, almost to give society a justification of their masculine performance and going against what others assume to be their gender. The stigma is still largely present and operates as a way to deter women from sport, as women taking part in sport is seen to undermine normative assumptions of the female body (Linder, 2011). Unfortunately, homophobia also plays a large role in this, still widely prevalent, especially in the field of sport, women do not want to be labelled as lesbian due to the stigma and prejudice around homosexuality itself (Tredway, 2014).

As well as stereotypes surrounding the more masculine sports, female dominated sports and those perceived as more feminine are also subject to the same method of stigmatisation, as Ellen and Caitlin describe:

Yeh, as in cheerleaders, they're all like really pretty, and skinny, and airheads, is probably like a stereotype. (Ellen, hockey player)

I would say that netball for sure is known as.. you're like blonde, like tanned, quite tall girls, quite bitchy...and then you kind of get... I always feel like there's... cheerleaders have a different kind of stereotype as well just 'cause you're... like, I don't know... like quite, I don't know if it's bad to say, like more like catty, like quite glammed-up girls. (Caitlin, netballer)

It is not just women who perform masculinity that are the subject of negative stereotypes; even those who perform femininity, what society expects and wants from women, cannot escape them. Due to the gender hierarchy and hegemony, femininity is subordinated through these stereotypes and language (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Athletes who participate in cheerleading and netball are at the centre of these stereotypes, being named as 'bitches' or 'airheads' and perceived as superficial. It is ironic that women are so heavily judged by their appearance and there is so much pressure for them to focus on the way they look, yet when they do, especially in the field of sport, they are condemned for it. Many people wish to uphold sport with hegemonic ideologies of masculinity pivotal to its character, and consequently anything that threatens this is fought against through criticism and tactics of ostracisation (Messner, 1992; Connell, 2012).

Conclusion

In conclusion, many of the participants expressed how they felt pressure from society, school and family to adhere to traditional gender roles, such as homemaker, wife and mother, showing how these expectations are influential to how female athletes behave. Through hegemonic masculinity, ideologies around gender roles are disseminated; as a result of this, gender roles and identities also become associated with certain sports. One of the barriers these athletes felt they still faced was the fact that many sports are still seen as 'feminine' or 'masculine' and therefore only seen as appropriate for a certain gender to participate in. Many of the participants relayed that they felt these ideas were mostly perpetuated in schools, an aspect of civil society, where the curriculum in PE is different for girls and boys, meaning this barrier is upheld (Connell, 2008).

Multiple participants shared how their natural behaviour more closely aligned with performances of masculinity; however they were often questioned and challenged for this. Their gender was called into question which resulted in marginalisation or them monitoring their behaviour and changing their actions so it was deemed more acceptable, supporting Butler's (1990, 2006) theory of gender performativity and performance. This again highlights how gender expectations are influential to how the athletes behave and present themselves, and although gender roles have developed, traditional ideas around femininity and masculinity are still prevalent.

The majority of participants pointed out that appearance and attractiveness to men are heavily associated with femininity and essentially what it means to be a woman. The vast majority felt the pressures to have 'the perfect body', with social media having a large impact on how the participants felt they should behave and present themselves. This resulted in an invisible gaze, leading to self-surveillance - individuals judging and assessing their own bodies and appearances and trying to 'improve' it (Foucault, 1991; Mansfield et al, 2018). The majority of participants were able to describe the 'ideal' body, and some of them pointed out that this goes through 'trends' which are more often than not

unattainable and contradictory to athleticism. Again, this shows how traditional ideas about femininity not being associated with strength and athleticism still remain.

Multiple participants acknowledged the negative impact of toxic masculinity on women's sport. Aggression and hyper-competitiveness are seen to be protected in sport above all other areas of society. This is only a minority of people but these people make up those in positions of power, and therefore could be viewed as hegemonic masculinity, resulting in their ideologies becoming the norm through civil society, celebrating this idealised form of masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). As a result of this, sport's rejection of femininity acts as a current barrier for the participants and further excludes women and more 'feminine' men from sport (McKay, 1997).

Many of the participants expressed how women are objectified and judged on their appearance above all else both in wider society and sport. The current research confirmed that criticisms of female athletes that are particularly pertinent are those relating to their muscularity, providing another barrier to women and sport, and emphasising traditional ideologies of femininity. Comments are made about female athletes looking 'like a man' and losing their femininity as a result of hegemonic ideologies, and the performances of femininity and masculinity, society has become accustomed to (Messner, 1992; Connell, 2002; Butler, 1998).

All the participants felt that the media played a large role in contributing to societies attitudes towards females in sport, with underrepresentation of female sports being one of the most prominent barriers athletes still face. As Gramsci, Hoare and Nowell-Smith (1998) concepts explain, the media is an aspect of civil society and disseminates ideas so that they become the norm. An idealised form of masculinity has been created and is associated with sport; therefore females are significantly underrepresented in the media as this representation of women is counter hegemonic. What little coverage there is focuses on the athletes' appearances in an attempt to undermine their sporting achievements and promote traditional ideas around femininity (Connell, 2002; Trolan, 2013; Fink, 2015). As previously

mentioned, social media plays a large role in disseminating ideologies but also makes way for more representation of female athletes and women with muscular physiques. This creates organic intellectuals and allows for counter hegemonic values to be disseminated (Gramsci, Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1998).

A large majority of the participants were able to identify the current stereotypes in female sport that dissuades many women from taking it up. 8 out of the 12 participants named the stereotype of a 'butch lesbian', used to insult women who have muscular physiques, marginalise them and deter other women from getting involved in sport through fear of the same punishment (Butler, 2006). Some of the participants also identified other stereotypes of 'bitchy' and 'airheads' relating to those in sports such as netball and cheerleading, the more 'feminine' sports (Connell, 2008). These sports were found to be more rejected by males and society due to hegemonic masculinity rejecting femininity, and sport being founded on ideologies of masculinity that celebrates aggression and competitiveness (Messner, 1992).

Lastly, multiple participants expressed that they felt female sports were looked down on by society, with them being seen as inferior to men's sport and assumed to be recreational rather than competitive and serious. Multiple participants felt that, and had evidence from their experiences, to show how male teams are prioritised at the university, even when they are the same or lower level than the female teams and athletes, perpetuating the discourse around female inferiority and maintaining their subordination (Connell, 2008).

Judith Butler's concepts are useful for the current research as they understand how gender is not natural or inherent (Butler, 1997). The data shows that the participants often feel they have to almost force acting feminine whereas they naturally act more masculine. Butler's theories of gender performance and performativity explain these actions; the sociological act of being, dressing, what sports they do, all of which are conscious decisions and therefore part of agency level actions. Foucault, Gramsci and Connell do not explain these actions to that extent. Foucault explains individuals actions through surveillance and self-surveillance, people feeling like they need to or should act in certain ways. However this is more through presentation and appearance rather than idealised gendered behaviours which Butler explains.

Butler's concepts aptly explain what people do and the fact that gender performativity is a conscious act, supported by the current research, the participants know how they act has consequences and therefore decide to act in certain ways, negotiating femininity (Mansfield *et al*, 2018). Butler is useful to explain how an individual negotiates gender roles and expectations put on them by wider society and she acknowledges the structures in society have influence on these behaviours, they are not just up to the individual entirely. However Butler only recognises the impact of these structures she does not go on to explain them or how they operate. Her theories of gender performance and gender performativity are based more on individual agency rather than structure, explaining how one performs their gender and how those performances are created and maintained. Foucault (1927, 1978, 1991) better theorises around discourses, self-surveillance and disciplinary technologies, explaining how structures influence these individual actions and decisions. Foucault's theories are therefore useful to use alongside Butler's to understand the processes and structures that influence an individual's consciousness.

Gramsci's concepts are beneficial to the current research as they go into even further detail on the structures in society. As well as this adaptation of his concepts, hegemonic masculinity, explains the power dynamic between males and females, explaining how males have and maintain dominance. Foucault explains how discourses and surveillance work to support power structures however Gramsci and Connell's concepts better understand and explain in more detail what these structures are, and for the purpose of the current study, why power lies in the hands of males (Gramsci, Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1998; Connell, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity is more useful than Foucault's theories in understanding how power is enacted and why power is held by men in university sport and sports and society more generally. However Gramsci's theories do little to understand individual actions and agency, and are therefore far more deterministic, making it useful to draw upon Foucault and Butler who understand conscious actions and therefore how to change these actions.

From a feminist standpoint, understanding individual agency and how to change one's actions is vital as it allows for a framework of progression towards equality between males and females (Mansfield *et al*, 2018). Foucault's theories are particularly useful for this as he explains how to challenge discourses,

acknowledging how they are created and therefore how to form reverse discourses. His concept of 'practices of freedom' and 'technologies of the self' give women far more scope to change their position themselves (Foucault, 1988).

Gramsci's theories about challenging dominant norms and forms of power understand it on a larger scale. In a 'war of position' and 'war of movement', change cannot be facilitated until a large majority hold the same values (Gramsci, Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1998). This suggests women have few options to change their individual situations. In terms of feminism, these can be useful concepts as it is not about a small majority of women gaining power, gender equality is not reached until all women are equal. Although this would involve a revolutionary movement, these concepts provide a useful theoretical framework in understanding how to change societies attitudes and values more broadly (Hargreaves, 1994).

Foucault's understanding of power that it is omnipresent almost ignores the effectiveness and efficiency of systems in place that withhold power, refusing to give it up and suggests it is more fluid than in actuality. This puts more onus on the individual to be able to disrupt power relations than might be fair. However, with the way Gramsci explains how hegemony is upheld and perpetuated, creating an overhaul of the system can seem like an impossible task. Therefore Foucault's concepts giving individuals scope to challenge discourses and power relations, and creating individual successes opens the way for more people to achieve this. Essentially enabling male dominance to be challenged on a smaller scale but more consistently, suggesting why his concepts are popular within feminism (Foucault, 1978; McNay, 1992). Gramsci's concepts are also limited when applied to gender as his theories were created to describe the relations of social class, with the hegemony relating to the ruling upper class.

Other limitations of the research occurred as a result of Covid-19. This meant that face to face interviews could no longer take place so some had to be rearranged to phone interviews and some were cancelled. As Adams *et al* (2014) states, phone interviews are convenient; however there is often a feeling of time

pressure resulting in the interviews feeling rushed. This was noticed during the phone interviews which meant that the data collected was likely not as rich as from the previous interviews.

In addition to this, being an inexperienced interviewer meant that the data collection was a learning process and my skills improved over the interviews. Consequently, it became apparent which questions were most useful and valuable over the data collection period, meaning the quality of the interviews will have varied.

The current research only uses a small amount of participants from one university, meaning the findings cannot be generalised across the population. Therefore future research should consider investigating using a wider pool of athletes from across universities in the UK. This will allow for further insight into the opportunities available to female athletes within a university setting and the attitudes held by a wider section of the population. Knowing where the opportunities are lacking for female athletes will mean that measures and initiatives can be put in place to rectify this. Gaining this type of insight is imperative to facilitate actual change to improve the lives and experiences of women, which is a key aspect of emancipatory feminist work (Somekh & Lewin, 2006). Future research should also investigate the distribution of funding in addition to opportunities across womens and mens sports at universities. As funding has such a large impact on availability of opportunities, this will enable money to be more evenly distributed across mens and women's sports and therefore opportunities will become more equal across genders.

Similarly to Connell's (2008) work, the findings from the current research suggests schools play a large role in the socialisation of children, forming their gender identity, particularly relating to sport. Future research should endeavour to discover the ways in which this is done and how the curriculum promotes hegemonic ideologies of gender and therefore how these can be overcome. By pinpointing the areas of the curriculum that promote gender differences rather than gender equality, they can be effectively targeted and addressed to give girls a more equal and positive experience in the education system, both in school and in further education. It is imperative that future emancipatory feminist research continues in this field as the current research highlights how sexism remains a problem in sport. This will allow

for further insight into why and how barriers still exist, and therefore how they can be overcome to bring about social change, to make sport more accessible for women and raise the standards of sport across all sectors.

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Appendices

Appendix 1) Information sheet



Participant Information Sheet.

Study: 'Perceptions of femininity and masculinity and how these influence female athletes' actions and behaviours.'

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of this study?

The aim of this study is to discover if and how the university's female athletes feel influenced or are limited by gender expectations. It will explore what attitudes there are towards female athletes and how these athletes perceive their experiences of sport.

The study will run from April 2019 to November 2019. All the data for the study will be collected through interviews with members from the university's sports teams. The results will then be analysed and the final paper completed by September 2020.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been invited to take part in this study because you are a member of one of Oxford Brookes University's sports teams. Up to 40 athletes of any level and discipline will be taking part in the study.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this research study. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet along with a privacy notice that will explain how your data will be collected and used. You will also be asked to give your consent. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time before the interviews are completed and without having to justify your decision.

As a student of the university your decision to participate or not will have no impact on any of your grades, assessments or future studies.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you decide to take part you will be asked to attend one interview which will take 20-40 minutes to complete. The interviews will take place on site at Oxford Brookes University and will be scheduled so as to not disrupt any of your other commitments. Granted your permission, the interviews will be audio recorded for data analysis purposes and for the principal researcher only.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Participating in this study will take up to 40 minutes of your free time. The risks associated with taking part are minimal. The interview may bring up negative experiences which could potentially be upsetting. If participating in this study you need only share what you feel comfortable with, you will not be pushed to share more information.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The potential benefits of the study are that it may result in a lot more knowledge about the experiences of the universities female athletes, what they think are positive and negative aspects. This could consequently have an impact on their future experiences playing sport for the university and the university's future athletes to allow for experiences to be more positive as a whole. It will provide more knowledge on the topic of gender identity and sport which will incentivise action to be taken if any issues are highlighted as a result of this study.

Will what I say in this study be kept confidential?

Any information collected about participants will be kept strictly confidential. To arrange the interviews, it will be likely the participant's identity will not be anonymous but all the interviews and data will be stored under a random pseudonym or code, concealing the participant's identity. This means once the interview is complete there will be no way to re-assign the data to the participant.

The data will be kept securely on the researchers personal laptop which is password protected. The data generated in the course of the research will be kept securely in electronic form for a period of ten years after the completion of a research project.

What should I do if I want to take part?

If you wish to take part please contact Milly Laffey via email: 18079111@brookes.ac.uk

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the research will be used for a dissertation for a Master by Research degree in the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences.

Who has reviewed the study?

This research has been approved by the University Research Ethics Committee, Oxford Brookes University.

Contact for further information

If you wish to enquire for further information please contact Milly Laffey via email: 18079111@brookes.ac.uk. If you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, please contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee on ethics@brookes.ac.uk or the Project Supervisor, Dr Stuart Whigham, on swhigham@brookes.ac.uk

Thank you

Thankyou for taking the time to read through this information sheet. If you wish to take part your participation will be greatly appreciated!

CONSENT FORM

Perceptions of femininity and masculinity and how they influence female athletes' actions and behaviours.

Amelia Laffey, MA by research student, 18079111@brookes.ac.uk

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.
3. I agree to take part in the above study.

☐☐☐

Please initial box

4. I agree to the interview being audio recorded

Yes

No

☐☐

5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications

☐☐

6. I agree that an anonymised data set, gathered for this study may be stored in a specialist data centre/repository relevant to this subject area for future research

☐☐

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of Researcher

Date

Signature

Appendix 3) Interview

1. What do the words 'feminine' and 'masculine' currently mean to you?
 1. What do you think they mean to other people?
 1. Have these meanings shifted throughout your life and experiences?
 1. How long have you been playing sport?
 - How family feel about playing sport?
 - How friends feel about playing sport?
 - Were you encouraged/discouraged to play sport?
 - Were you accepted in those sports?
 1. Are there any stereotypes in female sport?
 1. How do you think friends/people at the university perceive female athletes?
 1. Have your experiences in university sport differed from previous experiences?
 - Which experiences are more positive?
 1. Have your previous experiences in sport influenced your current sporting experiences?
 1. Do you train simply for your sport or for aesthetic purposes?
 - Which is more important to you?
 - Do you think it's the same for male athletes?
 1. If for aesthetic purposes, what are your goals?
 - Why do you want to look like this?
 - Is this an ideal?
 - Where has that ideal come from?
 1. How do you think the media portrays female athletes?
 - Fairly?
 - The same way as male athletes?
 1. Does the university treat its male and female sports teams the same?

1. Have you ever heard negative comments about female athletes you felt were unfair?

1. Before coming to university have you ever felt like you have been discriminated against in sport, received negative comments about being an athlete or whilst doing sport/exercising?

1. At university have you ever felt like you have been discriminated against/received or heard negative comments about female athletes/sports.

1. Do you think you changed your actions/behaviours on or off pitch as a result of any of these?

1. What do you think are ideal characteristics for an athletes?

- Is it the same for males & females?

- Is this just for sport or life of athlete in general?

1. Do you act differently whilst playing sport?

1. Why do you think you act differently?

1. Which kind of behaviour do you think comes more naturally to you?

1. Which kind of behaviour do you think is encouraged more in society?

1. Is this the same for males and females? Why?

Appendix 4) Example 1 interview analysis transcript

Interview 1

(30m10s)

just firstly how old are you? 21.

And what sport do you play? Volleyball. What do the words feminine and masculine mean to you? um feminine generally means like you're more like I kept like you look prettier you embrace like what makes you feel like pretty on the inside and on the outside and masculine just like big buff guy like walking around and you like throw that around at other people I guess.

Do you think that most people share that view about what those words are? Probably not, I don't think so no, I think people probably tend to see feminine as being like a bad thing nowadays on like both sides even if your a girl or a guy like masculine like they kind of what to blend them together more is what I think personally.

Do you think those words and what they mean has changed throughout your life? yes definitely and I think growing up like at least in the sports world I wasn't really allowed to be feminine like it was more you just have to be athletic and feminine wasn't really a real thing until I I kind of grew up and started being influenced more by the people around me and by social media then I kinda realised that oh like it is okay to be feminine and girly like within your own sport so i definitely think its changed.

what made you think that sport didn't really have a place for femininity? um I guess just like all the mainstream sports are dude sports or like they are all guy sports and so like you don't really see females allowed to I don;t know like express themselves and just like cover up for the most part usually like people or jewellery like we're all kind of made to look the same in within each sport i guess i don't know.

so how long have you been playing sport? um ive played volleball since i was nine years old competitively my parents met playing volleyball so I like Ive been playing my whole life.

Did they like encourage you to play it? yep. Did you have interest in other sport as well ? yeah I started out at 4 or 5 actually which is like way too young I started as a cross-country runner so i did long distance it was the worst thing ever but then i did volleyball as well as running so i switched over to that.

Do lots of your friends like play sports as well? yeh um especially from my high school I'm from the US so in Colorado specifically my high school if you didn't really do a sport you weren't really anybody so everybody did a sports so.

were you ever like discouraged from playing sports or like certain sports? um discouraged obviously from playing like certain sports like football and I guess like the super like hockey wasn't really an option and mean ice hockey and when i say hockey i mean like ice-hockey cause field hockey is not really a thing in the US so i guess even like basketball i thought

about maybe playing basketball but a lot of the people were like always like well thats a guy sport so like why do you want to play that so.

with like so in our schools we had options of what sports to do and some of them was just for boys was that the same in your school or could you play any sports? yep some of them were only boys like I don't think if you would have tried to play American football you would have been allowed to I don't think that was an option so.

Do you think there are stereotypes in female sports? yeh i definitely think female sports are kind of looked down as being like weaker overall even now um i think its like Carly Lloyd or something she's football she's on a US women's team for soccer i guess or football and then she went out like kicked a 50 yard field goal and stuff and then everones like well girls like still can't do that and so like its like we can even though like we're looked down on as being like less athletic i guess so i don't know.

um how do you think people at uni so not just people other people that play sports so just in general how do you think it's recieved? um personally playing volleyball I honestly think that people may come to watch as we wear spandex and super tight jerseys um I notice that netball like they wear little like tiny skirts that are like tennis skirts and I think probably most people don't go to like watch just enjoy the sport I think they probably go to watch like girls in little clothes wearing you now playing a sport.

have you ever heard people like making comments while watching? mmhmm yeh all the time and especially in high school because theyre high school boys and boys are just stupid they always would like cat call and like Figure out Who Was like the hottest on the Team and like Make Make Sure That They Really Talk to Them While We Are Playing the Most like just Being Very Immature about the Whole Situation and Making It Really Distracting to Perform Well While You're Playing your Sport.

and would it make you feel more self consious? yeh Exactly

um so before coming to Uni and well just like Comparing at School and Uni are they Quite Different? yeh um At Least in the US Club Sports Are a huge thing and so I Grew up Playing club volleyball but Also high school volleyball and so um there's Nothing Really to Compare Club volleyball to cause its year round and Its separate from All of Your School friends um but I Definitely Think like for my High School people Kind of Went to Sporting Events to Support Other Sporting Events cause like you know the volleyball team would like Watch the Football Team and then they'd be like ok well we have to go watch them. But here its like It's More like a Social Event like You Go cause you don't really Have Anything Else to so your like ill go watch a sporting event.

Do you find like is it more serious at uni or was it more serious before? Um maybe it depends sport to sport but at least volleyball here isn't very serious um well I mean I guess it depends on how you define serious like if you define it as like the level of competition it's a lot less serious like the level is really low um but at least like the athletes take it seriously it serious for them

Um which would you say, playing volleyball in clubs or in school, was it a more positive experience than at uni? Yeh I would say um back in colorada playing club and playing high school was like more involved I guess and so there was more of an opportunity to play that sport within like with people who accepted you and wanted you to do great whereas here at least for volleyball its kind of its own separate thing like its not we only have one practise a week whereas back how we have 3 to 4 practices a week so theres like more opportunity back home for you to grow within that sport I'm sure its like different for every single sport whereas at least for volleyball it kind of feels like its stunted a little bit like you don't have a good opportunity to grow within yourself for the sport

If you only train once a week to you go to the gym and do other training as well? Mmhmm yeh we have on Tuesday from like 6-7 theres times where we can train with the training staff at brookes and then from 8-10 at least at brookes we have court time and then every other Friday the bys team goes one week and we go the other we have to go to like the Cherwell school or something and like practice there we have to go to like an off campus place to practice so

And then do you go without your team as well do you do your own sort of training? Yeh um my coach has a lot of he seems to coach every possible team in oxford I don't know why he does it but um he coaches a mens national league team so I personally go and practice with them cause the levels higher and for whatever reason he seems to like coaching boys better like more receptive to boys playing volleyball an like I get more out of the boys practice than I do when he's with is which is really kind of crappy but yeh

Does he coach differently then? Yeh, so um cause I personally am a coach too I coach for 3 years during my undergrad college years, hes very um very like hands off, so we just had a game yesterday and he doesn't really teach you how to do any skills so our teams very young in terms of skills we have a lot of people playing new positions and hes not really helping them at all with like , heres what you do in this situation and heres how you do this. but when it comes to like the boys team he's always like here he like breaks it down for them and he's like here's every single skill here's how you do it and he like walks them through it instead of being like well you should know that so

Why do you think he acts like that? I mean I don't really know probably just cause hes an old dude an old guy and I don't know maybe cause he doesn't know or like theres that stereotype around womens athletes who are like well we cant take criticism without being like emotional about it so he might have that in his head and doesn't wanna like cross that line so he just stays over where its safe and then we don't really improve at all

Is that how it comes across to you, in that he doesn't want to do anything wrong sort of thing? Yeh like hes kind of like walking on thin ice at all times and doesn't wanna take a misstep cause I don't know that's just what it kinda feels like which is really crappy cause that not always gonna be the case

Have your other coaches been more like critical then? Yeh, at least like with my club coaches but I means its kinda different cause I had a variety of coaches I had a couple of guy coach and a couple of girl coaches but at least the guy coaches I did have back home they were very like technical and hands on and like heres how you actually get better and heres

how you do it and they would get off of us until we'd like actually do it and stuff instead of leaving us to do our own thing

How did the rest of your team take that were they fine with the criticism? Yeh um I mean I also I don't know if its because theres a difference between club sports where youre paying like thousands of US dollars whereas here youre not really paying that much money and its kind of just like an off think like yes we all want to be there but its not as serious I don't know if that's part of the mind set of like the girls in my club wanted to be better so they always worked to that whereas like here its kind of just like we wanna be there but its more of a social thing as well though I don't know I guess It kind of depends on the mindset of the people back home at least it was very well taken they all wanted to get better.

Do you go to the gym and stuff as well or do you just play volleyball? Yeh I try to work out 2 to 3 times a week just cause ive had a bunch of my friends who have got injured outside of volleyball because all they do is volleyball so I wanna make myself like healthier overall so I don't get hurt.

So that's your aim for gym just fitness? Yep.

do you train for aesthetics at all? No.

How do you think the media portrays female athletes? Um I think female athletes are still it not what there athletic performance ever is like well she looked good while doing this or she did all this stuff and oh by the way in parentheses she like broke this record right or we are always are coming to second to what men want so if like a man does something better then the female is always second so I think it was for the rio Olympics there was this article that came out and it was like um a mens swimming team got second and Ryan Lochte got second and Missy Franklin made the new world record for the womens 800 but like it was like down in parentheses right and so in theory the gold medal should be higher up then the silver but because it was male athletes they went first and oh by the way this female athlete is now world champion but shes just gonna be down here cause the male media is what drives it right now so they don't think that males want to hear about female accomplishments so.

Is that what you think it is to do with like predominantly male readers so theyre just not interested as much? Yeh.

Do you think, so you were saying theres more focus on how the women look when theyre portrayed, do you think there is more pressure for women, even as athletes to still look a certain way? Yeh, I definitely think so, I mean nobody really wants to look, quote on quote horrible in a picture if a girl has something out of place they instantly get ridiculed for it I mean even if theyre still like perfect if theres one thing that's out of place theyre gonna get ridiculed for that even though it could be like nothing to do with what theyre doing so I mean like serena Williams shes the tennis star shes like a quote on quote plus size athlete but she still is like so good at her sport and just because shes like a little bit bigger than everybody else it doesn't matter that she slike the best tennis player, I mean I don't know if shes like actually the best but shes like one of the best top tennis players on the world right but it doesn't matter cause shes quote on quote bigger than the other tennis athletes so yeh

Do you think apart from elite athletes as well do you think just at uni feel that pressure as well? Mmhmm I definitely think so I mean I know personally I like look at the volleyball players who are like on the professional level and who are just displayed for everything and they're physically gifted so they're like super tall and like they workout all the time because that's what they're paid to do right they have time to workout all the time and play volleyball and they're just physically gifted on top of that and I see that and I know I'm physically gifted in other ways but I see that and I'm like well that sucks that I don't look like that even though they're life circumstances are different we still like wanna compare ourselves to them exactly so.

Do you think lots of sports people either elite or just at uni train, do you think they're more sports focused or do you think lots of people have aesthetics at the back of their mind and train for that as well? Probably more aesthetics like I would say I guess it like depends on the level of sports that they're at so if they're on like a top team at least like I know personally my friends when they were on top teams it didn't really matter what they looked like cause they wanted the win um but if you're doing I don't know like a lower level sport or if even you're on a second team some people use that as their excuse to workout and to get better to like feel or look physically better so

Do you think the uni treats its male and female teams the same? Um I honestly don't think I have like an opinion on that I haven't really noticed um well I guess so I've only really ever heard about the mens rowing team and the mens hockey team I think yeh so I feel like they get more I don't know like attention I guess but I also haven't really heard much about womens teams getting attention so I guess if I like based it on that then yes they treat them differently cause the mens teams get more attention but the womens team could be getting more attention I just haven't really heard about it

With volleyball are the mens and womens team treated the same? Yes yeh

Have you ever heard negative comments about a female athlete that you thought were unfair, so it could be elite or someone you play at uni with? Mmhmm um especially in the volleyball world you have to its kind of quote on quote called the volleyball build so you have to have long legs and be super tall to in theory be a good volleyball player but some of the best volleyball players I've ever seen are Samoans and they're not that body type at all right they're not like the stereotypical Caucasian body type um and so sometimes a girl walks on the court and she doesn't have the volleyball build and you can tell instantly the people are judging her like oh she's not gonna be good but then she could be the best one on that team but before you see her performance you just judge based on looks

Do you ever feel like, or have you ever been discriminated against or like heard negative comments while at uni? Um not that I have ever heard I'm sure that it's probably happened but I haven't heard about it or paid attention to it

What about back home before? Um yeh for sure I guess like discrimination on the sense that we have a lot of adult volleyball leagues back home at least and there's a lot of the guys back home are like super good at volleyball and a lot of the girls are super good at volleyball too but they don't wanna play with the girls cause they feel that it brings the level down even though sometime the girls are just as good if not even better than the guys but they

don't want the girls to play with them for whatever reason like whether that be they don't wanna be like out-shone or they don't wanna like bring the level down I don't really know

Have you ever felt like your actions have been influenced by this sort of thing or do you always just do what you really want? I think when I was younger it definitely did um when I was younger I definitely made an effort to kind of show off when they're was like people watching whether that be like guys girls like a whole range of everything watching like college coaches all that stuff but then as I grew up I started to realise that like you really shouldn't be playing a sport unless youre playing it for you because you love it um then I definitely started enjoying it more for me and not really care who I was like around or if they had opinions on it if I could play with them or not I just was going to play to my best ability and if people wanted to play with me then that was great and if they didn't then that was on them

So when you were younger you felt more like you needed to prove yourself? Yeh

What do you think are ideal characteristics for an athlete? I think they have to be driven to perform the best in their sport or I think that you have to be really mentally tough cause sports are hard like sports suck most of the time honestly like going to training and practising and making the best out of every single touch that you have so you have to be really driven and motivated to actually be there cause most of the time nobody wants to be there you have to take advantage of whatever situation youre in um I think you do have to be I guess if you wanna be at a super high level there has to be some athleticism involved cause you have to have some skill towards the sport um but even that can be build over time so I think like as long as youre hard working and like really driven and motivated then youre gonna be ok in whatever sport

Would you say that's the same for men and women? Yeh

Do you think everyone would have the ideal male athlete and female athlete the same? Probably not I feel like if were like talking about mainstream media like guys looking at girls I feel like they if like a girls hard working they wouldn't really notice that they would probably just notice more physical things like if she was physically gifted at the sport or I don't know just like stupid if she like looks good and stuff like that

Do you feel you act differently whilst playing a sport than you do off the pitch? Um a little bit it kind of just depends so I get really cocky when I play volleyball sometimes and it mostly is just cause I go on I try to be really nice like start off with and then its usually something happens on the other side of the net and I like get pissed of and then I get like really cocky um but then once im off the court I'm back to being like nice and stuff but for the most part its like pretty even I try to be like even keeled and just like its just a sport so enjoy it and enjoy my time playing it

Do you think that's good for sport like whilst people are playing sport to get riled up? Yeh I definitely think so like at least in volleyball cause I have very limited experience in other sports volleyballs very much a game of momentum so whoever has the most energy the most like team cohesion I guess is gonna be the team that come out on top 9 time out of 10

even if your playing against a more skilled team whoever has the most like rar rar stuff going on behind them is usually gonna come out the victor.

Do you feel like when you're not playing sports you have to make an effort to not be like that or? Um I personally am not like a huge rar rar person I tend to be like a more even keeled and just like go with the flow so I don't struggle with that but I feel like yeh probably some people have to take it down a couple of notches cause they're not in the sports world so they have to realise that they're either in like a professional world or academic setting and figure out that

Do you have team socials and stuff as well? We do yeh, I haven't been to any of them but I hear they're really fun

Do the men and women teams have socials together? I think so from like the invites that I see on facebook they we've been partnering with like I think we did one with cricket and pole dancing and something else and I think our men's team always goes with our women's team cause I don't think our men's team does a good job of like organising their stuff so I think they just kind of hop in with ours.

Do you think like sporting, how do you think the rest of the world sees like athletes, is there like preconceived ideas, what ideas do you think they have about them? I think universally athletes are kind of seen as almost like a step down from being a god in most worlds cause um like football is like the biggest sport in the world and so those athletes who are the top so like Ronaldo and Messi and I don't know there's probably like other ones but um they're seen as like gods to the to everybody cause they're so good at their sport and they bring such honour and like all that stuff to their countries and so I think if you're a successful athletes then you're seen as like a very you're held to like a different standard in society cause you're always under the spotlight because people are striving to be like you at all time

Do you think for non elite athletes people have ideas about the certain characteristics they might have? Yeh I think there's definitely stereotypes um I think it depends on the sport at least especially in the US so are soccer slash like football people are since football is not like a big thing it's kind of you're kind of like a stoner almost I guess would be like the most accurate cause you're kind of like a misfit cause you're playing a weird sport in American terms and then American football would be like the jockey douche guys just like pump weights all the time and do that an then womens soccer um I personally think they're like the badasses cause they're out slide tackling people playing on astro turf so I definitely think there are stereotypes um I think it depends on who you talk to what their version of the stereotype is but I definitely think there are stereotypes for all levels of athletes.

For like the jockey sort of person how would you describe them? I think so i'll just like i'm just thinking about my highschool football team cause its like at least in American sports we take it way too seriously at least that my personal opinion so in like American football they build like these gigantic stadiums and so its just a huge like testosterone fest and they go out and like tackle people and theyre like "oh yeh im big and buff and I just tackled you" so they spend a lot of time in the weight room a lot of time practising just doing stupid boy stuff that isn't even necessary right but they I don't know theyre just meat heads I guess lifting weights and stuff

Do other people see that as a good thing? I think I honestly think as small majority do compared to the larger majority but for whatever reason the small majority is what media focuses on because I don't know for whatever reason society has deemed that they can have a louder voice so that small percentage that think that like being a meat head and doing all these like weird douchey things that usually aren't acceptable in society is ok because a small section is saying its ok compared to the huge section that's like "well that's actually kind of weird and I don't know why you're doing that" but for whatever reason they have a smaller voice than the smaller majority

Do you think if it was the women's football team doing that it would be as like celebrated? Probably not they would be like well why are you doing that like that's not something women should do like I don't know I'm just thinking about there's this Instagram account called like bar stools warts and they like just post videos of college guys doing like weird things like smashing tables and drinking lots of beer and then like doing stupid things and I think if it were to be like women doing that then we would be ridiculed and it would be like well that's not a girl thing to do at all but who's to determine if doing all that stuff is a girl thing or a guy thing like why do guys only get to do that

Yeh do you feel that that male sporting behaviour is kind of a bit protected? Yeh I think the small egos have a little bit to do with it and they don't wanna be um over powered by females who actually have just as much power as they do they're like holding on to it so hard I don't really know why but they're holding onto their old ideas and not really letting new ideas come in

Do you kind of think that it's a power imbalance sort of thing, like the males feel like they should have the power but actually? Yeh I even would say that like you can like divide it females, masculine males and then all other males so like the toxic masculinity come into it and I think that's the part of the male species that's still holding onto it cause not all males are like toxic like that like a lot of them are starting to learn that that's not a cool thing to do um so I think that the toxic masculinity is what's holding onto that and for whatever reason they still have such a strong hold over like athletics and media and all that sort of stuff.

Yeh I was gonna say do you think that toxic masculinity is more concentrated in sports rather than other aspects of culture? Mmhmm I definitely think it's rooted in sport and it comes from sport probably from a young age um and then it just translates into all sorts of other things.

Appendix 5) Example 2 interview analysis transcript

Interview 9

(19m12s)

So firstly, how old are you? 20.

And what sport did you play for Brookes? I was on the cheerleading team.

So what do the words feminine and masculine currently mean to you? Um I'd say like to me they don't mean an enormous amount, it's more like, I feel like society, it's a term that society uses but individually it doesn't really mean that much but yeh it's more like a stereotype than an actual like it doesn't I don't really think about it that much.

What do the , like what does it mean to other people then in society? I'd say like, stereotypically it's like feminine is like girly or like motherly and then masculine is like strong and aggressive like being a leader which is like obviously a big, like a stereotype so, but I think it does get applied quite often.

Do you think, yeh it still relevant for other people? Yeh I think a lot of people sort of consciously um think like agree with it but I think like me and the majority of people unconsciously sort of sometimes think along with those stereotypes.

Um have the meaning of the words shifted throughout your life? Um probably, yeh when I was, probably when I was younger I didn't really think about it at all but as I get older just sort of notice stereotypes more and am just more aware that it has a lot of meaning to some people more than others.

Did they mean the more like stereotypical thing to you when you were younger or was it just still not really a thing? Um I think when I was younger I'd think feminine would be like girly whereas now yeh it doesn't really mean as much.

Um how long have you been doing sports for? Um quite a long, I started horse riding when I was about 4 and then sort of did that and gymnastics and athletics pretty much from then.

Um how do your family feel about you doing sports? Um they've always been really supportive yeh and just encouraged like to try lots of different sports.

Yep have there been any um like specific ones they've pushed you towards or encouraged? Um mainly horse riding, that's the one that I did sort of most intensely and competitively so yeh I was encouraged to do that quite a lot.

Um are your friends sporty as well? Um a few, yeh sort of some are some aren't, yeh a few more than others yeh.

Are they all like accepting of the fact you do sports? Yeh definitely.

Um in all the sports that you've done were you like accepted into those equally sort of thing? Yeh, I'd say the sports that I did sort of mainly were horse-riding and gymnastics which I'd, are generally like female dominated so yeh it was like it wasn't unusual for me to be doing them

Um do you think there are any stereotypes in female sports? Yeh definitely, I think, I feel like there's like to sides so like, with like cheerleading its sort, sort of like it's not a serious thing and it's like

females don't take it seriously or just do it for like the uniform and stuff and then on the other side it's like, like a, people think that women who are strong are butch so there's like two sides to it.

Um how do you think people at the university and like just friends, people in general, perceive female athletes? Um I think it depends like how serious they are I think it's like as you get more serious with it like the stereotypes are a bit more clear and I think it sort of depends what team you are on as well like I feel like with cheerleading there's already a lot of sort of stereotypes a long with it so with that it's sort of like people don't think it's a real sport or just yeh just don't take it seriously at all and people generally think that like it's not as difficult like the female rowers like, they're, people think it's not as competitive as the men's team for example.

Um why do you think people don't take it as seriously like sports like cheerleading and that? I think with cheerleading it's because it's always mainly been women who do it and a lot of it is the uniform I'd say, like the majority, when I talk about it a lot of the things, especially guys say is focussed on what you wear which I would, like isn't really the case when men play sports and don't wear a lot of clothes. So yeh I think with cheerleading especially it's like it's people, guys just don't, not guys but like people in general just don't take it seriously because it's quite theatrical I guess and what you wear as well.

Um have your experiences in university sports been quite different to before university? Um quite different I'd say it's, it's can be, it's more intense like the cheerleading team was a lot more intense than other teams I'd been on before um and is also like, like socials and stuff, like is a bigger drinking culture obviously than a like before uni.

Um were either experiences more positive than the other or have they just been different? I think they're just different, I didn't really have any like negative experiences with like cheer in uni they have, yeh it's just been different really.

Um do you feel like your previous experiences doing sport have influenced you quite a lot currently? Um I think so yeh just how I approach things and stuff yeh from like I did gymnastics which is pretty similar to cheerleading um and horse-riding is quite different but I did that competitively so like things that I've learnt from that I apply to what I do now.

Are there things that you definitely wouldn't try or that have wanted to try but haven't? Um not really I've, I go to the gym now and do weights more which before I didn't because not, I was like quite intimidated by, by that so yeh I feel like that's something but I do that now so.

Um so yeh its kind of links to this, do you train now for just sport or for aesthetic purposes? Um I think when I like first started going to the gym like last year I did like, I didn't enjoy it very much and that was just for like aesthetic purposes but now it's more like I enjoy feeling strong so it's less about how I look really, it's like if I feel like, feel stronger after it that's more what it's about.

Um what were your aesthetic goals when you did sort of have that as your aim? Um it was mainly like, mainly to lose weight really like yeh when I was on the cheer team I like our uniforms were quite like revealing so it can be a bit like, feel a bit self-conscious. Especially like at varsity we performed and like a lot of people came and a lot of like the rugby team came so it was kind of like a bit uncomfortable so yeh.

Um do you think it's the same for male athletes? Not really, no not at all I don't think there's, there's definitely not as much pressure, like pressure or focus on what you wear or how you look like I think things that people would say to women athletes like 'oh, like what you're wearing is too revealing'

would never be said to male athletes really like when like football or rugby team are not wearing shirts no one picks up on that and yeh I think it's a bit, like a bit of a double standard definitely.

Um with like aesthetic goals where do you think people's goals for that come from? I think it's like, at the moment probably like social media influences it a lot I'd say like models and stuff on Instagram, and like society's views on what is like aesthetically appealing would change, like it would be different to like 10 years ago so yeh, but especially at the moment with social media I think people get a lot of what they think they should look like from that.

What do you think, so obviously not for you personally but as an ideal that some people aspire to be like, what, how would you describe that? Um I'd say like right now it's like curvier whereas, yeh whereas in the 90s it was like people wanted to be like stick thin whereas now it's like on trend to be like curvier.

Yeh do you think, you said like on trend, do you think body shapes and like ideals do follow a trend? Yeh definitely like if you look like, looking at pictures of like models from like the 50s and stuff like Marilyn Monroe looks completely different to like models now and yeh I think it does just change like with society.

Shows how whack it is.

Um how do you think the media portrays female athletes? Um I think it can be positive but it is also, there's definitely a double standard there as well like serena Williams gets a lot of criticism for being aggressive and it's said in a very negative way whereas if a, if there's a male athlete who's being aggressive it'd be like ah he's, like they'd put him, make him look like put him in a positive light because that's how, like how he's supposed to be. Um and yeh they like With Serena Williams was the first I think first person to win something but they just, the media portray it, like lessen it I would say and things like with Simone Biles like they try and sort of like, I'd say try and reduce how successful some women are and try and like quieten it down even, like when they've achieved a lot.

Um do you think, so you said like the type of portrayal is quite different, do you think the amount of coverage is equal? Um I'd say, a lot of sports you know like women's football has definitely got a lot less um I'd say like with tennis, like Serena Williams and tennis that's, I think that's relatively equal like obviously she's really well known and um but I think there are definitely women's sorts, like women's rugby, women's football, things that are traditionally masculine when women play them get a lot less coverage.

Do you think to become like Serena Williams' level in general male athletes don't have to be as high standard as women? Yeh I would think, yeh or have to like, don't have to, yeh maybe don't have to work as hard or overcome as much um because I'd say women are, can be discouraged from pursuing sports to that level so to get to Serena Williams' level you'd have to overcome people telling you that you shouldn't be doing that whereas a man might have been encouraged which would have made the whole process a lot easier.

Um do you think the uni treats is male and female sports teams and athletes the same? Not really, I don't, there isn't a like a male cheerleading team so I don't really know about that but when there are guys that are on the, I think it's a bit different but when the like guys join the cheerleading team there's a big stereotype around that and like everyone just assumes that they're gay and just like there's a huge, like it adds to the stigma of it but I know with like the, like the rowing team, like the women, the women's team are really successful and just as competitive as the men and don't get as much like coverage or funding yeh definitely.

Um have you ever heard negative comments about a female athlete that you thought were unfair so it could be either an elite athlete or someone that you know at uni? Um not like individually I know that a lot of people, are like critical of what the, cause the cheerleaders train at Headington like a lot of the people who work at Headington are very like critical of what they wear which I don't really think is relevant to anything but it seems to be quite important to them um.

What do you mean?

Just like all like the um, they literally just focus on what they're wearing all the time they're just like 'they're not wearing anything like they're showing too much skin, they look like baby prostitutes' yeh it's just like they don't focus on that when rowers are walking around with no, like no shirts on.

Before coming to uni have you ever felt like you've been discriminated against in like a sporting context? Um maybe in high school like girls weren't allowed to play rugby like full contact rugby which at the time I didn't really like notice but looking back is a bit like, I would've wanted to do that, get to tackle people. Um and yeh like we, we played different sports so yeh like that but never, never, I never like noticed really.

Um and then the same question for at uni, have you ever felt like you've been discriminated in sports? Um not personally but I know of, like say with the rowers they, the men's team get a lot more sort of like encouragement than the women's and just like, I'd say female athletes get a lot more sort of criticism for things that aren't really relevant to their athletic performance.

So not really directed at you but you kind of feel it with the general attitudes.

When you play sports do you think that your behaviour is different to how you would be in just general? Um sort of like at uni or?

So just doing sports in anywhere, in the gym, at uni do you feel like, like sort of your characteristics, like mental characteristics do you feel like they're different?

um yeh I think like with cheerleading I was more confident cause you're sort of like acting and I'd say like when I'm in the gym I'm feel like more confident cause I feel like more strong.

Um have you ever had to change your action or feel like you've needed to change your actions? Um not really I don't think so.

What do you think are ideal characteristics for an athlete? Um I'd say someone who has like a really good work ethic um competitive probably um just really driven and are just passionate about whatever sport they're, that they compete in.

For you would you say that's the same for a male and a female? Um I think sort of like there's basic characteristics that both would need to have but then I think to be successful generally like a woman need to, stereotypically, be a bit less sort of like, if you're aggressive that generally isn't received very well or yeh things like that I think there's sort of a few more um guidelines that are like sort of put upon women athletes.

So like your personal ideal athlete would be the same but then to like play the game you think a female athlete would need to have different aspects? Yeh.

Um do you think that's the same, so you were saying like a woman would need to hold back on aggression and stuff? Yeh I think potentially, depending on the sport but so like in rugby it's a bit,

probably be a bit less noticeable if a women was aggressive but like with tennis like I think at a point if you get so much bad press then you'll probably gonna tone it down.

Um would you say those ideal characteristics are the same to be a successful athlete or to just be a successful person in general? Yeh I think there's definitely like there's a few like baseline characteristics that you generally need to be successful and then depending on the field like women probably, like if you were gonna be in business, I'd say it would be quite difficult because people don't tend to like women who are assertive um or confident, the like you just get called bossy whereas a man would get called like a boss or like if you're, a man could just have a like good idea and be just strategic and then a women would get calculated and it yeh it's things like that that I think like to be successful you need to have certain characteristics and then there's certain ones for women generally that you need to like tone stuff down.

Um yeh so that's kind of covering the next few questions, um do you think those sort of characteristics are encouraged, like directly encouraged for males from a young age and that? Yeh I think it's that like boys will be boys like they're encouraged to like play fight and be aggressive and whereas when like girls do that it's like 'oh no like its not lady like to do that' so it's definitely, certain traits are encouraged a lot more in boys and like they're given positive reinforcement for them whereas like girls are, they try and stop girls showing those traits.

Have you ever had that sort of, has any, like growing up did you feel that a lot, just those attitudes in general? I didn't, when I was like younger I don't think I really noticed it but when I look back I would get called bossy a lot whereas I don't think like a boy in my class who had done the same thing would have yeh things like that.

I think that's it do you have anything else to add that you think might be relevant? No I don't think so.

Interview analysis.

Interview 1

- emphasis on appearance - Pretty on inside and out - is physical & a characteristic way of behaviour. ✓
- feminine is negative - feminine not ideal male dominance.
- male dominance in sport from young age - not allowed to be feminine - athletes separate from female ✓
- with influence from outside of sport realised it is to be girly ✓
- male dominance in sport - 'mainstream', females out - organized hegemony & Foucault power relations. ✓
- Females performing masculinity not allowed to express selves - Bully.
- gender roles & discourse 'guys sport' which is appropriate for males.
- sports in schools split by genders - hegemony - civil society - shared hegemonic ideals about girls and boys.
- Discourse - Women are weak - even when prove they are not & empathic discourse is still that they are less athletic. ✓
 - ↳ Ideologies determined to maintain male superiority.
- Sexualisation of females - uniform - governing bodies - male gaze - makes athletes self-conscious & not able to perform as well, puts them off sport thus maintaining male dominance. ✓
- Coach prefer male teams - looks down on female sport? not takes it as seriously? - Hegemony? person in position of power suggesting women are not as good as men - Foucault. ✓
- Treats male & female teams completely differently - very hands off not really care for females - puts more effort into male team teaching & explaining - allowing to progress - holding fingers back - hegemony or Foucault? to maintain male superiority.
- Discourse around female athletes as emotional - creates barrier with coaches & makes afraid to coach - discourse alienates women and prevents progression - Male Dominance. ✓
- media focuses on female athletes appearance before athletic performance - civil society disseminating hegemonic ideologies of femininity & gender roles & any coverage second to men. ✓
- Again showing hegemonic ideologies of masculinity and sport being male domain by putting male lesser achievement first - Also adds to discourse around women being less athletic & skilled in sports by not belittling their higher standard of achievements. ✓
- Appearance is always scrutinized even in sport placing value on looks over skill - hegemonic ideologies.
- More focus on mens sports teams - superiority - university institution - civil society - hegemonic ideologies subtly spread through giving male teams more focus. ✓
- The Guys not wanting to play with girls as 'girls level down' - even when females are higher skilled/level - discourse around

female inferiority in sport ✓

↳ Not wanting to admit / refusing to play maintains belief system ✓

- More emphasis on appearance of female athletes than skill - purpose to be nice to look at.
- Institutions build big stadiums to celebrate most 'masculine' sport - masculinity is celebrated and money and time put into it - clearly a big priority - males superiority - Hegemonic masculinity. ✓
- Civil society - media - used to spread norms even when in reality only small percentage of people value these things & see them as positive - hegemonic masculinity has power & louder voice so controls norms & ideologies. ✓
- Toxic masculinity is upheld in sport whereas it's not acceptable in other parts of society. ✓
- Again an example of toxic masculinity being celebrated specifically in sports & women being marginalised from it. ✓
- Hegemony protecting male superiority ~~and~~ - patriarchy. ✓
- Example of hegemony & control over civil society - sports & media & using it to disseminate masculine ideologies. ✓
- Toxic masculinity rooted in sport & main source of it in current society - marginalising women & not as barrier for women to be involved with sports. ✓

Interview analysis

Interview 9

- Words feminine & masculine don't hold much meaning for participant - mostly just stereotype-hegemonic ideologies.
- Gender roles - neither for women & leader for men - hegemonic masculinity & gender performance.
- Consent to ideas of hegemony - civil society.
- When was younger ideas of femininity were more closely linked to hegemonic ideologies.
- Cheerleading not taken seriously as sport as largely female & do it for superficial reasons - placing value on appearance over skill - hegemony & discourse.
- Strong athletes stereotyped as 'butch lesbians' - heterosexual matrix - either way women are marginalised in sports for being 'too girly' or too 'manly' - hegemonic masculinity.
- People at the university don't see cheerleading as a real sport & the women's teams are not taken as seriously as the men's e.g. women's rowing which is very competitive - hegemonic masculinity.
- Participant argues it's not taken seriously as it's female dominated & due to that they wear skirts which other people focus on, not like when men don't wear a lot & it is performance aspect - not in line with traditional masculine traits of sport - aggression etc.
- Lots of sporting spaces are male dominated & intimidating to women - hegemonic masculinity.
- Used to train for aesthetic purposes but now does it to feel strong, counter hegemonic & gender performance.
- Uniform set by gov body - make feel self conscious & aware of male gaze - hegemonic masculinity & uniform of surveillance to make athletes judge self and 'look better' in uniform.
- Double standards for men & less pressure for them to look a certain way - women judge a lot harsher, told 'shamed' for 'revealing' clothes but men don't wear shorts & is accepted.
- Social media & models/adverts - civil society - influences what is seen as attractive - trends again to suit men's needs.
- Curvier is trend but used to be stick thin - civil society.
- Hegemonic ideologies of fear & abuse discriminated in media - civil society - aggression entitled in women & celebrated in men.
- Media diminish achievements of women to create discourse that they are less successful & capable in sport.
- A lot less coverage of women's sports, particularly the typically 'masculine' ones e.g. football, rugby - hegemony.
- It is a lot harder for women to reach success in sports - total shouldn't be pursuing it - hegemonic masculinity.

gay & marginalised for it - heterosexuall matrix.

- Despite success the uni-civil society & hegemony - still prioritises the men's teams.

- Cheer team, including participant - criticized for uniform - hegemonic masculinity.

- Male staff criticize uniform saying it shows too much & that call them 'baby prostitutes' - sexualises them but don't make comments about male roles.

- In high school participant wasn't able to participate in certain sports as split by gender so e.g. netball which she said she would have enjoyed - missed experiences & opportunities - hegemonic ideologies.

- Doing her sports makes her feel more confident & more stronger than other aspects of life - sports encouraged for males not females, actively cultivating confidence in men & not women - hegemonic masculinity.

- Competition & hard working most important again - counter hegemonic.

- Certain characteristics in women e.g. aggression not received positively when in women - hegemonic masculinity.

- As well as outside of sport certain characteristics are praised in men & criticized in women outside of sport & women often feel need to 'tone stuff down' to be accepted & successful - hegemonic ideologies.

- Hegemonic ideologies & gender performance - aggression is discouraged in boys & girls told to stop because it's not ladylike.

- Participant used to get called 'bossy' - active women marginalised for being assertive - hegemonic masculinity - didn't realise at time it was unfair - consent & civil society - school.

